

*The Mountains* was a story written by Porte Crayon, probably around 1850, that was published as a series in Harper's New Monthly Magazine between 1872 and 1875. The story features Joseph Roy, Washington Roy, and other families living in the Randolph County region of West Virginia at that time.

This file is a compilation of all ten installments. Because of the article layout, there are a few pages that contain some paragraphs from articles immediately following or preceding *The Mountains*.

If you want to download the full issues containing the stories, Catherine Thompson documented each issue with download links, names of characters and the surnames of the actual families mentioned in the story. She also has a nice overview of the author, "Porte Crayon," which was the pen name of the writer and artist David H. Strother. You can find all that, here: <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~wvpendle/portecrayon.htm>



## THE MOUNTAINS.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



THE STAGE-DRIVER.

ON a pleasant day in June we started from the Berkeley Springs on a pleasure excursion to the Alleghany Mountains. Our equipage was an old-fashioned Troy coach, drawn by four horses, and painted red. The coachman was a native mountaineer, whose eccentricities would furnish material for a readable chapter; but having so much

else to write about, we turn him over to our artist. The coach was followed by a pair of spirited nags under saddle, and in charge of a negro groom, affording the travelers by turns an agreeable relief from the irksomeness of long confinement in the lumbering vehicle.

Besides these accessories, our company consisted of nine persons, five gentlemen and four ladies, who shall be duly presented to such of our friends as propose to accompany us (in fancy) on our romantic journey.

The Winchester Grade, or Mud Turnpike, as it is contemptuously called in winter, was now dry and trotable. The weather, such as is not uncommon in this region, made animal existence a positive delight. Among the mountains sat queenly June, full robed in green, all pranked and perfumed with many-colored blossoms, looking dreamily beautiful.

Our traveling company was fortunately assorted—at least they all seemed to think so, and frequently felicitated themselves and one another on that circumstance. In this land of easy and unsuspecting sociability ten days of dining, dancing, and picnicking together at the Springs had advanced ordinary acquaintanceship to something like friendship by brevet; but stationary society is always more or less stiff. Now packed and jostled together in the coach, excited by novelty and rapid motion, the reign of ceremony was superseded by a carnival of wit and good humor, and an exuberance of laughter which bordered on rollicking, and they pelted each other with spiritual bouquets and bonbons so vociferously that a passing market woman thought the whole party was *en route* for the insane asylum at Staunton.

Why so general? interrupts an exacting wisacre. Can't you repeat some of the witty things that were said and done on that much-vaunted occasion? Thrice sodden materialist! would you have one parade the withered chaplets and twisted Champagne corks of yesterday's feast as samples of its flavor? We have no art to catch and reproduce the sparkle of the wine, nor the still more subtle and evanescent aroma of social enjoyment. We only know we had a glorious time, and cherish the recollection as we do the vague unwritten music of our dreams.

About mid-day our travelers called a halt on the banks of a glassy stream, overshadowed by a stately grove of sugar-maples. Near at hand was a cool bubbling spring, and the remains of a sugar camp, where they found logs and rude benches enough to seat them all for lunch. The baskets were unloaded without delay, while fair and skillful hands spread and distributed the savory meal.

Among the lower brutes feeding-time is a season of scrambling, snarling, scolding, and scratching. With godlike man alone it is

the culminating hour of courtesy and good humor. There is, indeed, no true sociability without eating and drinking, and while in the genial mood we will redeem our promise, and introduce our party individually to the reader.

That tall, rather portly, and every way substantial-looking person, clothed in pepper-and-salt tweed, and a broad-brimmed white hat, is Mr. Meadows, a large landed proprietor and cattle-dealer of the South Branch country. The equally substantial middle-aged matron seated on the log beside him is Mrs. Meadows, whose mild countenance and placidity of manner do not entirely conceal the latent power and energy of character which have earned her the reputation of the best housekeeper in Hardy County. The rosy-cheeked, bouncing girl of eighteen is their daughter Lilly, just returning from a boarding-school in Philadelphia. Miss Prudence Primrose, a bright little New Englander, with delicately chiseled features and petite figure—a precious casket, stored with all the rarest gifts pertaining to her sex, and the more valuable for its portability. She was Lilly's teacher at school, and, as her friend, is going to spend the summer vacation with her.

We are all proud of the next lady, and I have reserved her to the last as an agreeable surprise. There she stands in her becoming weeds, her glorious woman's face illuminating the sable hat and veil, like a star shining through a crevice in the clouds. Having seen her, you will never inquire thereafter whether she is short or tall, plump or slender, blonde or brunette; your ideal of perfect womanhood is established, and every difference or deviation therefrom is a defect. This is our charming young widow, Mrs. Dendron. Fair Rhoda, as we call her, appears dazzlingly fair; yet, in truth, she is a decided brunette—the lily and the rose in her waxen face toned down by the softest tint of moon-lit olive, just enough to harmonize it with her hair and eyes of flashing jet. In like manner the ringing sweetness of her voice is subdued and enriched by a transparent shading of contralto; the graceful elasticity of her movements chastened by unaffected dignity; the very brightness of her smiles bewitchingly tempered by a haze of thoughtfulness: it was not a shadow that you felt, but a tender softening of the light.

We knew but little of her history, only that she had married very young, and, a year after, her husband fell in a duel. Several years had elapsed since then, and she was now not over twenty-four or twenty-five at most—a woman for whom a miser might give up his gold, a soldier his ambition, a sage his wisdom, and each believe himself enriched by the sacrifice; a woman that a penniless poet might fall despairingly in love with, and write romantic verses about.



I hope I have not said any thing especially foolish, nor committed myself in any way?

By-the-bye, I had forgotten to mention that the widow is reputed to be immensely wealthy; but, you know, these watering-place reports are not always reliable.

That erect, manly figure, with handsome though weather-beaten face, grizzled hair, and whiskers of military cut, dyed black, is Major Martial, of the U. S. A. The major has achieved honorable distinction in the Mexican war, and limps perceptibly from the results of a wound inflicted by the arrow of a wild Comanche. He has traveled extensively in Europe and the East, and, like most of his profession, is an agreeable and cultivated gentleman.

As the major is a bachelor, and, in consequence, does not like any allusion to his age, we refrain from guessing at it; but we shrewdly suspect he thinks himself old enough to retire from active service to some little castle of his own, where he may have chief command (nominal, at least) and live like a feudal baron.

Richard Rattlebrain is a young gentleman of twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, lightly esteemed by his seniors in society, but in high favor with the girls as a reliable waltzing partner, the only art or occupation for which he seems to have a special turn. Yet, in spite of the cynics, Dick is invited and well received every where, and no social jollification is thought complete without him. He owes his success to the fact that he has not brains enough to take tragic views of any thing, but is bubbling over with the glorious wisdom of youth—wisdom that drinks the wine of life all bright and sparkling from the cup, incredulous of deleterious drugs in the bottom; which enjoys its city sausages without suspicion of dogs and cats; which implicitly believes its morning-glories imperishable, and would unhesitatingly swap its hopes of fortune for a golden ringlet—wisdom too ignorant to know that society is hollow, stuffed with nothing so solid and useful even as dry bran. Dick knows none of these things, and is happy, beloved by his fellows, and tolerated by the elders as a sinful pleasure.

Augustus Cockney is a dry-goods clerk, from New York city, and bitten with a desire for some wild mountain experiences. At the Springs he was rather a jack-a-dandy in dress and manners, but in getting himself up for this excursion he appeared like a cross between an English groom and an Italian brigand; so loaded down with fire-arms, knives, hatchets, and game-bags that he was a nuisance to himself, and a source of mingled merriment and terror to the company.

The major relieved us all by dryly remarking that "real fighting men never

showed their arms except to an enemy;" whereupon Augustus, who was nervously polite and obliging, and especially deferential to the major's opinions, hid away his incumbrances in the coach-box.

Last on our dramatic roll is your humble servant, Lawrence Laureate, Esq., an author by courtesy, who has got some little notoriety by writing for the magazines and newspapers, and at present enjoys the additional dignity of being supposed to be engaged in writing a book.

While I may acknowledge to you in confidence that I haven't an idea of such a thing, not a page on paper, nor the shadow of a plan in my brain, I have permitted the delusion to circulate without contradiction, for I find some advantage in it.

I am a bachelor, shy and secluded in my habits, and quite unskilled in the lighter social accomplishments. In view of my presumed literary engagement, the girls excuse my awkwardness, don't expect me to dance, and treat me as they do all other "engaged gentlemen."

I am thirty-three years of age, with very limited means, and ought to have some regular occupation. The hypothetical book satisfies my friends and the public on that score. It apologizes for late hours and red eyes of mornings, dignifies careless apparel, and excuses a host of other irregularities and short-comings. It envelops one's commonest doings in the romance of mystery. When I pay my yearly subscription to the village paper, and invite the editor to drink, next week's issue contains a notice of the forthcoming work, which inflames the impatience of the literary world to boiling-point.

Acquaintances introduce me as the celebrated author of the greatest book of the age—not yet out—something ponderous, which crushes people who don't know better with a sense of their own insignificance. In brief, one enjoys all the deference, distinction, and immunity of successful authorship without exposure to the risk of failure, the envy of critics, or the exhausting weariness of brain-work.

Happy is he who is always going to write a book—and don't. Yet nature has no lights without their corresponding shadows; and the life of a sincere and devoted worshiper of the Muses has its mournful and even tragic aspects.

How many tempting dinners and jolly suppers must one sacrifice at the bidding of an exacting brain! How many a budding affection is nipped by the deadly jealousy of the frosty goddesses of Parnassus! How many a burning dream of ambition is ruthlessly quenched! And this is the poet's life; for his lofty ideal in the clouds must he forsake all earthly pleasures, loves, and glories. Glorious, indeed, is the service; but there



PRUE PRIMROSE.

are at times doubts and repinings which amount to torture.

I, who can read in a warm, living face volumes of poetry tenderer and sweeter than ever yet were penned; I, who can not hear the rattle of a drum without a tumultuous pang of suffocated enthusiasm; I, who from earliest childhood have dreamed of a part in the life drama of passionate romance and noble deeds—I have listlessly drifted from the active stage into the position of a critical spectator, a scene-shifter, a supe.

Especially do I, in moments and company like the present, feel the inanity of my occupations, and the impotence of art, with its chiseled stone, its tinted rags, its dry technicalities, and idealistic conceits, to satisfy the longings of an ardent, eager soul. I am humiliated with the meanness of envy while I compare my sallow face and flaccid muscles, effeminate diffidence and unconsidered presence, with the manly port, iron nerves, and gallant assurance of the major as he stands there now beside the fair widow, pressing her acceptance of another glass of claret punch and well-buttered sandwich, by his own bold hand sweetened and buttered ex-

pressly to tempt the fastidious taste of our social queen.

Or when I match the unprofitable learning and dyspeptic wisdom of my studious, uneventful life with the gushing ignorance and roistering folly of Dick Rattlebrain's making love to that bright little Yankee Primrose, I feel abashed at his superiority.

The only consolation I find is in Gus Cockney there, who can neither ride, shoot, nor chew tobacco, and who, being out of his native element, will possibly veil my weaknesses by his more patent greenness in rural accomplishments; but even he, assured with the recollections of "soirées dansantes," Central Park promenades, and a full fashion-plate and dry-goods vocabulary, is making himself agreeable to Lilly Meadows.

"Mr. Laureate," said a soft voice at my elbow, "you are dreaming away the opportunities of your life."

I started at the coincidence of thought and speech, and saw the major and sweet Rhoda standing in front of me, she offering the identical glass and sandwich he had given her the moment before.

"Come," she said, with a look that was bewitchingly coaxing; "you must leave your fairy-land for a while at least, and devote yourself to life and action. Here's your dinner."

My face flushed and tingled as I took the proffered refreshment.

"With such encouragement, madame, one might readily become a hero."

"Bravo!" cried the major. "Admirably pointed; a charming and appropriate compliment."

"Nonsense, major; Mr. Laureate alluded to the sandwich he was looking at when he spoke."

"Come, Mr. Laureate, and support me by your authority. This obstinate—a—young gentleman calls this 'a petrified frog;'" and Miss Primrose, with suffused cheeks and



laughing eyes, handed a pretty fossil for my inspection.

"This is a trilobite—and a very perfect specimen too," I answered. "There! are you convinced it is not a frog? Don't you see it has no legs? I must try to get a collection of these trilobites."

Dick laughed uproariously. "Well," said he, "if you get many such bites, I wouldn't give much for your teeth." Struck with a sudden thought, he darted off to the spring, and, after turning over several stones and raking in the mud, he presently returned with something mysteriously wrapped up in a green leaf.

"Here, Miss Prue, is a fossil I'll bet a thousand you don't know the name of. Come, hold out your hand."

The little lady unsuspectingly extended her hand, and the whelp dropped a nasty reptile into it—red, spotted, and wriggling.

"How pretty!" she exclaimed, examining it with unconscious composure. "This is a diminutive saurian—*Lacerta seps*—vulgarily called an eft."

"By thunder!" exclaimed Dick, stunned by the failure of his joke. "She's not a bit scared!"

"Of course not," she said, innocently. "The creature is harmless as you are, Mr. Rattlebrain."

Dick was slightly dashed, and remarked, by way of compliment, "Why, if I had done that to one of our girls, she'd have fallen into conniptions."

"What's that, Mr. Rattlebrain?"

"Conniptions," said he, as if trying to remember his catechism—"conniptions are fits."

"Fits!" she repeated, with demure surprise. "And so you purposed to amuse yourself by scaring me into fits. Mr. Rattlebrain, your gallantry is on a par with your knowledge of natural history."

Dick was temporarily quenched, and there are hopes of his mending his manners.

Meanwhile Cockney had strolled away with Miss Meadows through the trees and across the road, where they had a view of a mountain barn with its appurtenances. Gus got up a laugh at the uncouth structure, and was endeavoring to impress the young lady with the superiority of Broadway and Fifth Avenue architecture, when suddenly a grizzly monster sprang out of a swampy thicket and saluted them with a roar which so amazed the unarmed cavalier that he took to flight. Seeing that his companion stood her ground, unconscious apparently of the cause of his sudden exit, he returned and excused himself as well as he could with much talk and many gestures.

Shortly after he took me aside, and, with a perplexed countenance, asked: "Mr. Laureate, what sort of a thing is a ridge-back?"

I couldn't explain satisfactorily. "Well, then, a sub-soiler?"

"Oh, that is an—an agricultural implement—an improved plow to break up stubborn land."

"No; what I mean was an infernal beast with long legs, a bristling back, and immense proboscis, which rushed from a thicket over there and frightened Miss Lilly dreadfully. She told me it was a 'ridge-back'—a 'jumping alligator,' a 'sub-soiler;' and, in fact, she was so agitated—hysterical, I may say—that I couldn't get the idea exactly, and I hadn't my rifle with me."

"Oh, that was a swine—a breed peculiar to these mountains."

"A swine," repeated Augustus, looking sharply to see if I was quizzing; and then, apparently satisfied, continued, "Very peculiar indeed, I should think—and not dangerous?"

"Not at all."

"I'm glad, although Miss Meadows says they don't have such things in Hardy County."

But hark! The tantarra of the coachman's horn warns us that it is time to take the road again.

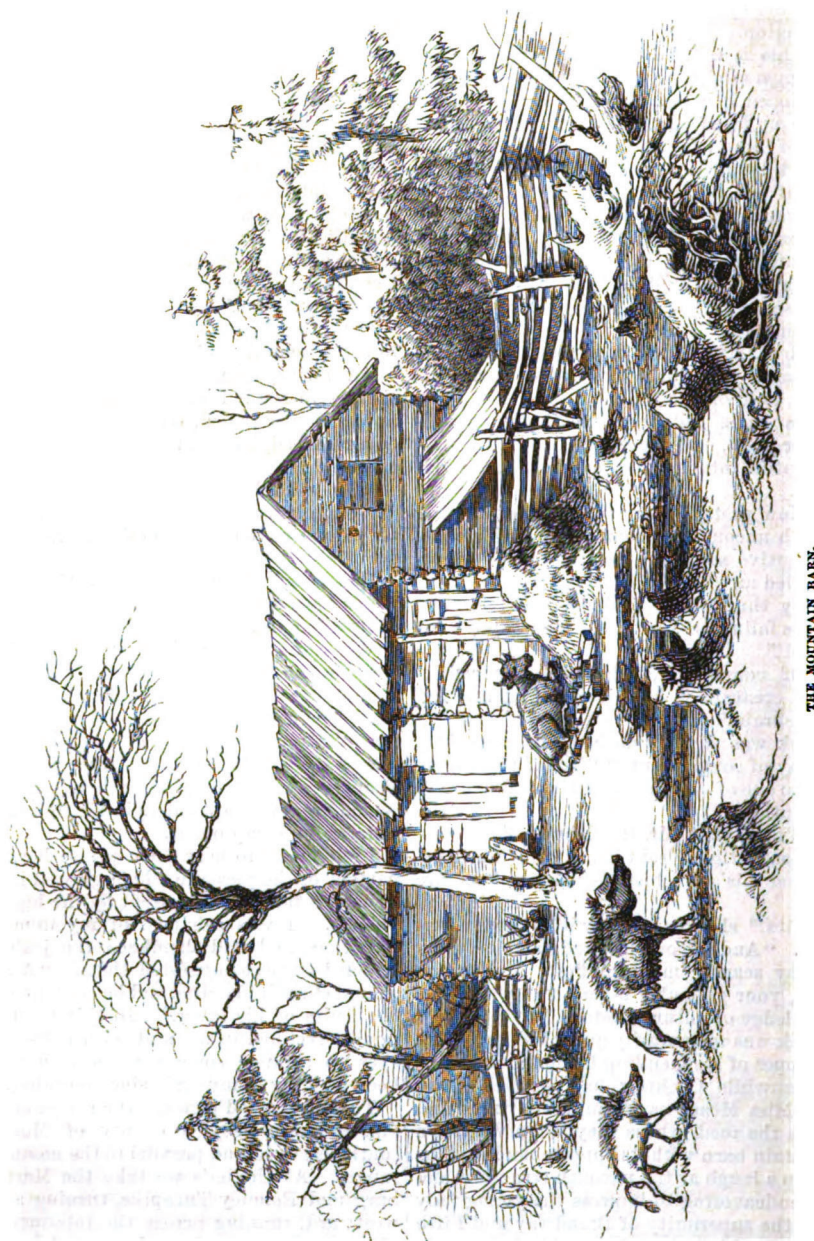
We resumed our places rested and refreshed, the incidents of the halt affording new themes for humorous raillery and laughter. The major and Rhoda took the saddles for a dash on horseback, and, in truth, they were a stylish-looking pair. Even the South Branchers commended their horsemanship, which, from the best riders in Virginia, is no unmeaning compliment.

I felt proud to hear them praise her, and partook of the pleasure which glowed in her animated face as they swept by the lagging vehicle. I was ashamed of my unmanly repinings, and had dismissed the jealousy which I suspect suggested them. "A man should cherish his gifts, and be content with the fruits of his labor." In this frame of mind I reclined in my seat with half-closed eyes to arrange some rhymes which had been jingling in my brain since morning.

Thus we passed through the rather sterile and sparsely peopled county of Morgan, southwestward and parallel to the mountain ranges. At Ungler's we take the Martinsburg and Romney Turnpike, turning sharp westward, running across the intermediate ridges, and traversing the grand ranges through gaps made by the Cacapon River and its tributaries.

Fording these crystal streams, we draw rein on the western bank of the North River, to view a perpendicular cliff on the opposite shore, whose moss-grown battlements and jagged turrets, extending for half a mile or more, rise five hundred feet above the stream.

Tradition names it Candy's Castle, from an early settler who is said to have lived in



THE MOUNTAIN BARN.

these rocks and defended them successfully against the Indians.

We are now in Hampshire County, and a few miles further brings us to Slane's Cross-roads, where Fah's Tavern promises a comfortable shelter for the night.

The tavern is a plain log-house, with a double porch all along the front—a regular drovers' stand—not overinviting externally, but with an air of rustic neatness within,

which, with the motherly greeting and hen-like aspect of the landlady, promises comfortable entertainment to such travelers as are wise enough not to be overfastidious.

The advent of such a party as ours was, indeed, no common occurrence in these parts, and the comely Cochin China matron fussed and cackled around in a manner which set the house astir. The negroes scampered, chickens squawked, dogs barked, cows bel-



lowed, pigs squealed, the cat got her head in the cream-jug, and all the rustic neighborhood gave tokens of unusual excitement. The supper was worthy of the hubbub, and was honored to the satisfaction of the hostess, who poured out coffee and apologies with simultaneous fluency.

The coffee—a milder beverage than is usually served under that title—stimulated no one unduly, so that when madam came round with her tallow-candles, no one objected. The ladies, as Dick irreverently remarked, went to roost uncommonly early, and were all lodged together in one room. I dare say there is no impropriety in our picturing to ourselves how they climbed up by the aid of high-backed chairs, and with a bounce disappeared in the downy depths of their feather-beds, suffocating under fringed and tufted counterpanes of snowy whiteness, and pillows edged with double ruffles and cotton lace; and how, when safely nestled in these fluffy heights, the question arose as to who should descend to put out the candle which stood flaring on the table below them, and whether it was possible for any one so doing to climb up again in the dark.

Fortunately the smiling hostess appreciated the situation, and returned in time to bid them good-night and carry off the candle. The gentlemen finished their cigars, and such as preferred it took a night-cap, ruffled with mint and sugar, and then retired to enjoy their respective dreams.

The following morning, brisk and breezy, found every body bright and sharp-set for the substantial breakfast, which challenged criticism, as the major had gallantly cajoled the hostess into trying his private recipe for making coffee. It was substantially the same as hers, but with some slight variation of ingredient proportions—to wit, four times her measure of ground coffee, one-fourth the usual amount of water—no chiccory.

"Why, Sir," she exclaimed, in amazement, "it'll be pizen!"

"That's the word," he answered, with a humorous wink, "rank pizen, but, modified with your delicious cream to suit the taste, it won't kill." The major drank his black.

At table the usual compliments were exchanged, and the events of the night discussed. The ladies had had several alarms, occasioned by an owl in the garret and a skirmishing of cats on the roof, which tumbled some loose bricks down the chimney, which brought down with them half a dozen chimney birds' nests, which filled the room



TWO COUNTRYMEN MEETING AT CROSS-ROADS.

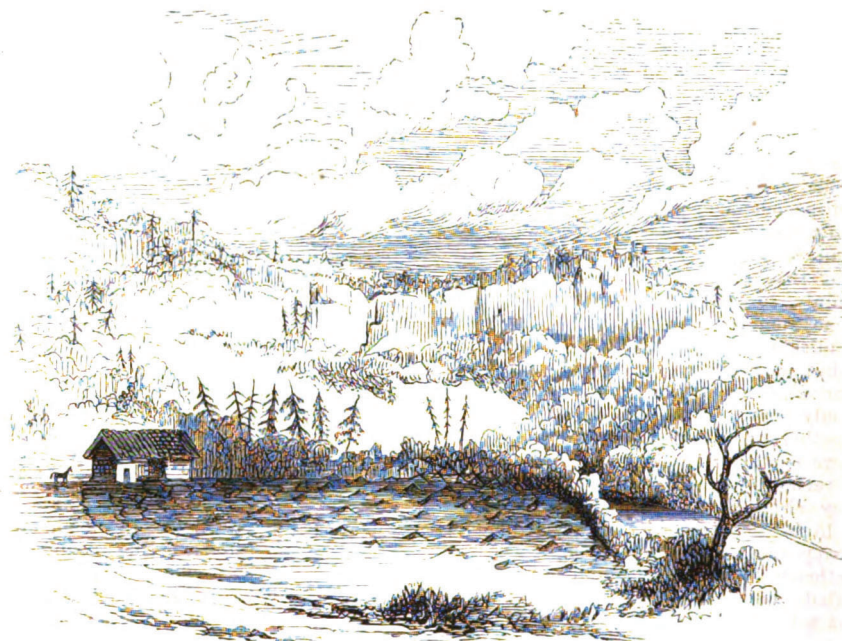
with soot and the twittering of the old swallows, who came to succor their young ones. The girls were too profoundly imbedded in their own feathers to take an active part in the disturbance, and could not scream to any advantage, so they covered their heads and took refuge in dreams.

At the recital of this nocturnal concatenation, Dick glanced slyly at the little Primrose. "I'll bet a thousand dollars Miss Prue wasn't scared—she knows too much of natural history."

As the sun rose over the misty hills, illuminating the woods, meadows, and grain fields, all fresh and sparkling with dew, our travelers started for an episodic visit to the famous Ice Mountain of Hampshire, only two miles distant from their lodging-place. Nearing the point of interest, they turned from the main highway, and followed a road passing over a singular narrow isthmus formed by the erratic doublings of the North River. For a quarter of a mile there is barely room for the passage of a single carriage on the summit of the compressed ridge, whose sides descend precipitously to the stream washing their bases a hundred feet below. The abrupt projection gradually subsides, spreading out into a beautiful meadow farm, encircled by the stream except at the point of passage.

Opposite the descending road rises a hill five hundred feet in height, its summits formed of grinning precipices, conforming in its cove-like front with the circular sweep of the river; a talus of fallen stone reaching from half-height to the bank of the stream, with a few savage pines and evergreen shrubs dotted here and there, completes the picture. Crossing the shallow water by a rude trestle foot-bridge, the visitors perceived the chilling influence of the locality ere they touched the shore, and the wrappings





THE ICE MOUNTAIN.

brought at Mrs. Meadows's suggestion were distributed and found quite comfortable.

First they drank from a fountain whose waters were cold enough to make the teeth ache, 44° Fahrenheit by the major's pocket-thermometer. Then searching in the crevices of the rocks and under the moss and fallen leaves, they found abundance of ice and snow to benumb the fingers and gratify their curiosity.

The proprietor of the property then joined them, and civilly enlightened the visitors with his observation and experience.

In dry seasons the snow was preserved under the rocks from winter to winter; in very wet summers it sometimes disappeared or was very scarce in September and October. He had dug a small pit six or eight feet deep, where the snow accumulated in winter, and with no other protection than a covering of plank to shed the rain, it never melted. He, however, had little need of ice, as the spring house he had built over the icy fountain served all the purposes of a patent refrigerator, preserving his milk, butter, and fresh meat for weeks.

To demonstrate the accuracy of his statements, the visitors were invited to view the premises, where they saw the articles described, and were treated to a glass all round of the richest, coldest cream they had ever tasted.

The major ascertained that the mountains fronted northwest. The mass of broken sandstone forming the talus was open and

permeable throughout. In winter, snow and ice accumulated in these crevices and caverns to the very depths, and this, protected by the position of the hill, the non-conducting debris of rock, remained beyond the reach of summer heats, but, like other ice deposits, yielded sometimes to the warm summer rains.

The ladies thought it was wonderful. What? the phenomenon or the explanation? Both, Major Martial. The major bowed, but insisted that nothing was wonderful which could be so easily explained by natural science.

Between the river and the rocks at one point is a narrow stretch of level ground which nourishes a group of lofty trees, with shrubs and grass. Here were some rustic seats, where our travelers reposed after they had satisfied themselves with the curious and scientific aspects of the locality.

Dick endeavored to engage some one of the girls in a snow-balling flirtation, but owing to the peculiar atmosphere, or the presence of the elders, his advances were frigidly repelled.

Rhoda observed some pretty wild flowers growing among the rocks, and called my attention to them by inquiring their name. While I was stupidly endeavoring to answer her question, the major nimbly sprang forward, gathered, and presented them to her. "No spot on earth so bleak, madam, but will bring flowers to greet the glances of the sun."



She gracefully acknowledged the gallantry, and then cast a glance at me, which I fancied was reproachful, as if to say, "That was a poet's opportunity, and you lost it."

Returning as they came, our travelers regained the main road to Romney, and reached the county seat of Hampshire about mid-day.

Romney is a pleasant village of five or six hundred people, situated on the right bank of the South Branch of the Potomac, on a sloping plateau nearly a mile from the stream, whose course is through a deep gorge several hundred feet below the town. The location is breezy, and the views in every direction mountainous. That from the Yellow Banks, half a mile below the town, is one of the most artistically composed landscape pictures that can be found in nature.

There are churches and reputable schools here, and, what is of more immediate interest to our tourists, a tavern famous for its good mountain cheer, although not much for external show. Its long, low-browed porch, with well-worn wooden benches and bottomless chairs, is a favorite resort of the citizens during their leisure hours, which are not usually very limited. Among the frequenters of this village forum are men of extensive reading and general information, who, being of a polemical turn, take care to dodge each other; but a stranger from any part of the country can readily fall into a discussion upon any subject whatsoever, which may last to the conclusion of his natural life, provided he has the leisure and pluck to stand up to it.

After dinner our tourists again mounted and resumed their journey. Crossing the Branch by a covered bridge, they pass the rocky gorge of Mill Creek, and, following the Northwestern Turnpike for seven miles, turn sharp to the southward on the Moorfield Grade.

The purpose had been to reach Moorfield that night, but the episode to the Ice Mountain had thrown them behind, and now sunset surprised them ten or twelve miles from their destination. For some time the progress of the coach had been slower than the condition of the road justified, and the driver, being



PEACH-AND-HONEY.

questioned, reported that his off wheel-horse had cast a shoe and was dead lame.

There was a blacksmith's shop a mile ahead, and a farm-house of very modest pretensions where they might get supper and accommodation for the night, and have the horse shod. It didn't promise much comfort, but what was more attractive to the younger members of the party, there was novelty and a smack of adventure in the arrangement. The Meadows family, for the sake of their company, regretted they had not remained at Romney; but as matters could not be mended, they made themselves cheerful.

The farmer, merchant, blacksmith, and county squire, all in one individual, placed his limited accommodations frankly at the disposal of the strangers. With willing hearts and amiable tempers all round, difficulties vanished, and there were quilts, counterpanes, and pillows enough and to spare. While supper was preparing, the gentlemen were invited over the road to the store, where they were regaled on peach-and-honey, which, for the benefit of the uninitiated, we will describe. This favorite beverage is compounded from the contents of a jug and a jar, one containing a brandy distilled from peaches, and the other strained honey. These are the reliable ingredi-





TAKING AN ALTITUDE.

ents, mixed in suitable proportions. Some add water, but it is not essential.

This is a very enticing stimulant, and popular in this region, although chemists insist that the distillation contains an alarming percentage of prussic acid. But chemists and moralists find some poison or dirt in every gratification that poor humanity invents to assuage its ills or direct its dullness; and of all dictatorial dogmatists, the dyspeptic is dietetically the most dogmatical dog in the manger.

A "blasted Briton," one of the officers taken at Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, in endeavoring to apologize for the excesses and brutal ill temper of his compatriots during their captivity, thus reviles and slanders the favorite drink of our ancestral heroes of 1776:

"On the arrival of the troops at Charlottesville, the officers, what with vexation and to keep out the cold, drank rather freely of an abominable liquor called peach-brandy, which if drunk to excess, the fumes raise an absolute delirium; and in their cups several were guilty of deeds that would admit of no apology. The inhabitants must certainly have thought us mad, for in the course of three or four days there were no less than six or seven duels fought."

Unfortunately the inhabitants of these mountains know little about chemistry, and less of dyspepsia, and blindly persevere in their peach-and-honey until they die of it, at eighty or ninety, without knowing what hurt them.

If the assertion of the Darwinian theory has alarmed our human pride by assuming to obliterate or bridge over the gulf between

imperial man and the lower brutes, let us expose the flimsy conceit, and reassure society by indicating an un-failing and universal psychological test. Brutes, from the highest to the lowest types, from the chimpanzee to the polliwig, drink their water pure, as they find it. Man, "reasoning at every step he treads," from the most enlightened philosopher to the most groveling savage, has invariably invented something comfortable to mix with his.

There might, indeed, be found other distinctive characteristics quite as conclusive, and rather more flattering to our side; but this alcoholic solution is strong enough in itself to stimulate our faith and restore our cheerfulness.

In the course of my travels I have had occasion to be surprised not only at the ingenuity and variety of man's stimulating inventions, but also to remark characteristic differences in the manner of taking them.

While on a fishing excursion I once visited a village on the southern coast of Massachusetts, and stopped at a temperance inn. Just as we were starting out I offered Captain Coffin, our boatman, a drink from my private bottle. In the presence of numerous witnesses he refused with a curtness that bordered on incivility. As the breeze struck us just outside the harbor, to check a qualm of incipient nausea, I handled my flask a second time, and observing that the skipper eyed it with less abhorrence than before, I offered it again. We were passing at the moment between the light-house and a coasting smack; and, after glancing cautiously from one to the other, he made a gesture of refusal. When about ten miles out I again resorted to my preventive for seasickness, and, having taken my allowance, was about to return the bottle to the haversack.

The captain blandly observed "that people who were not used to the water needed a little encouragement occasionally, and, for his part, he didn't see where the mighty sin was."

Pleased with the liberality of his sentiments, I extended the bottle a third time. Scanning the horizon for several minutes, he satisfied himself we were out of sight of land, and not a sail visible.

"I'm a little dubious about our bearings," said the captain, "and guess I'd better take an altitude;" so he accepted the bottle, and withdrew behind the sail.

The sun was shining propitiously, and I think he took several before he was satisfied.

The mountaineer takes the same, identically, but by a more direct proceeding, without doubt or circumlocution.

The colonel calls on the squire to talk over business or politics. The visitor is scarcely seated ere his host, delighted with the opportunity, displays his favorite stimulant on the hospitable board.

He dilates on its age and pedigree with a laudable pride, and complacently calls his guest's attention to the bead and aroma of the precious fluid.

There isn't a headache in a gallon of it, and the squire shows his implicit faith in the assertion by swallowing his tumblerful. The colonel follows suit, and then, with a courtly bow, expresses his satisfaction *de profundis*.

"Sich licker, squire, is a credit both to your head and your heart."

This is what is called doing the thing *viva voce*, as they used to vote in old Virginia.

On the following morning our travelers rose rested and refreshed, and at an early hour resumed the route to Moorfield.

Passing through another gap overshadowed by rocky precipices several hundred feet in height, they enter the celebrated valley of Moorfield, the garden of Virginia—a land of Beulah for agriculturalists and cattle-raisers.

This valley, inclosed within an amphitheatre of mountains of majestic height and picturesque contours, lies level as a bowling-green, some fifteen miles in length and from one to three miles in breadth. Winding gracefully through extensive corn fields and broad meadows—its course indicated by double lines of stately trees—we see the South Branch River dividing the valley nearly in equal parts. The spurs and pla-



THE COLONEL.

teaus jutting out from the bases of the mountains are occupied by handsome brick residences, surrounded by substantial out-buildings, while near the centre, on the river-bank, rising from a grove of fruit and ornamental trees, we see the spires and glittering tin roofs of the village of Moorfield.

As we drive along, every thing that meets the eye betokens wealth and prosperity. The roomy and substantial homesteads stand in inclosures adorned with shade trees, fruits, and flowers. Fat poultry cackle and waddle about the premises in every direction. Fat steers in the meadows wade, in lazy happiness, through grass up to their bellies. Fat sheep browse delicately on the pleasant upland pastures. Fat work-horses lounge around the plethoric barns and stables, waiting for something to do. Fat negroes drive fat oxen yoked to broad-tired carts. Fat hogs wallow in unctuous mud-holes by the road-side, while fat colts whinny listlessly after their fat mares, bestridden





MOOREFIELD VALLEY.

by the obese proprietors of these broad bottoms. The very gate-posts have an air of corpulency, being thrice the girth of those planted in thinner districts.

Fording the river, we at length reached the town, and drew rein in front of Mullin's Hotel, where a typical landlord, an animated monument of good living and easy times, stood ready to receive us.

And here ensued a hospitable debate, which affords the opportunity to explain more particularly the organization of our party and its objects, so far as they were developed.

Novelty and uncertainty being among the most attractive characteristics of these

vagabond excursions, it must be confessed that at the starting none of us had very definite ideas of what we meant to do, or where the spirit of adventure might lead us.

While lounging at the Springs, the major and myself had thought of a trouting expedition to the Alleghany glades. Mr. Meadows recommended a route through the South Branch Valley, thence across the Alleghanies to a wild mountain district, abounding in trout and rich in subjects of incidental interest.

As he was homeward-bound with his family, it was suggested that we might charter a coach and travel across the country, instead of the usual route by Cumberland and



New Creek, which is chiefly by rail. The saddle-horses we would find convenient in the travel beyond Moorfield.

This arranged, it was agreed to enlarge our party sufficiently to fill the vacant seats—nine inside being required to make the coach run steady, so said Tommy T—, the driver.

Messrs. Rattlebrain and Cockney, who had danced themselves into the good graces of the young ladies, were elected by their contrivance to fill two seats. Mrs. Dendron, who was a universal favorite, crowned our pleasure by accepting an invitation from the Meadowses to spend a month with them in Hardy.

In default of her presence I believe the excursion would have fallen through, for I suspected the major of a little planning—but it is ill-mannered to be too suggestive.

*En route* we had amused ourselves proposing and discussing various plans of action, of which Moorfield was to be the centre. Now the hospitable Mr. Meadows insisted on taking the whole company home with him with a pertinacity which indicated that a refusal would be a disappointment, if not an affront. I recalled the fate of Hannibal at Capua, and suggested fears lest the seductions of baronial hospitality and charming society might enervate or defeat our plans for the mountain expedition.

I thanked Providence I had seen Venice before the echoing song of her gondolier had been silenced by the fizzing and screaming of the locomotive. I was anxious to get into the mountains before the steam-horses and bill-posters of our progressive civilization had defiled the temples of Nature, and in time for trout.

"There, his balloon collapsed," said Dick, with a guffaw.

"My dear Laureate," suggested the major, "you should have served your fish before the *soufflé*."



THE VAN OF CIVILIZATION.

I felt that the case was hopeless; betrayed by those who should have been my allies, and overwhelmed by the ladies.

"Of course, gentlemen, if such is your pleasure, you will go on; but I must remain in town to make arrangements for our trip."

My obstinacy was politely charged to the eccentricity of genius.

"You will at least condescend to come out and dine with us to-morrow?"

I looked at the widow instead of the speaker, and answered, "Yes, certainly; and, until to-morrow, adieu."

The sources of the South Branch originate in the counties of Highland and Pendleton, forming three principal streams, called respectively the North, Middle, and South forks, flowing in a general northeast course, and uniting in Hardy County, the South Fork entering immediately at Moorfield. Hence, after a course of forty miles through Hardy and Hampshire, the stream joins the North Branch of the Potomac at a point fifteen miles below Cumberland.

From the greater length of its course, the



area drained, and the superior volume of water discharged, it might be considered the main Potomac River; but there are peculiar topographical and geological characteristics which have confirmed that title to the smaller stream of the North Branch.

Along its whole course, running parallel with the mountain ranges, the South Branch is bordered by bottom lands of extraordinary fertility. On the upper tributaries and through the county of Hampshire these alluvials are comparatively narrow; but in Hardy they spread into magnificent breadths, and Moorfield is, *par excellence*, the capital and centre of the South Branch country. Such is the depth and fertility of this soil that fields are shown which have produced profitable crops of corn for sixty years in succession without other care than the annual plowing and planting. On one occasion a measured acre, selected at large from a field of standing corn, yielded one hundred and sixty-four bushels.

Owing to the want of navigable streams and railroads, this corn finds its way to market in the form of fat cattle, and stock-raising is the chief occupation and source of wealth throughout the whole region. Secluded by redoubled ranges of lofty mountains and imperfect communication with the outer world, the inhabitants of this valley have all the homogeneousness of an island community, preserving the simplicity of ancestral manners, and often the immobility of ancient opinions. Their intellectual and social cultivation is considerably above that of the surrounding country, while their profuse hospitality and liberal customs remind one of the English squirarchy of past centuries.

Their occupation of cattle-raising brings them in relationship with the highlanders of the Alleghanies, among whose wild and healthy ranges the growing herds are distributed during the summer months, boarded and cared for at a fixed price per head.

Their frequent journeys to and fro in the interest of these cattle familiarize the wealthy lowlanders with the adventurous lives and hardy sports of the mountaineers.

In the opposite direction their business leads them to the cattle marts in the Eastern cities, where their daughters get their wardrobes and boarding-school accomplishments, although in the more substantial domestic virtues and accomplishments they find their best teachers and models at home.

While steers and broad acres are their counters in the estimates of wealth, the horse is still their representative of pride and luxury, and both men and women are among the best equestrians in Virginia.

The extensive meadows, rivers, and adjacent mountains all abound in their appropriate game, while the favorite pastime of the valley—

“Driving the deer with hound and horn—”

is right baronial; but as this is not the season for hunting, we will not excite vain fancies by dwelling on the subject.

But he who would see a country combining in the highest degree the elements of substantial wealth, good living, rural independence, picturesque beauty, and romantic sports, let him visit the valley of the South Branch.

Having taken counsel of divers acquaintances in the village, I arranged a programme for our mountain tour, which I hoped would prove sufficiently attractive to counteract any disposition on the part of my friends to linger amidst the seductive influences of Meadlands.

Thus prepared and fortified, I rode out there the next morning to exhibit my plans and fulfill the engagement to dinner. The house was a stately double brick mansion, with a tin roof, surmounted by a belvedere, embowered in trees and surrounded by out-buildings, betokening wealth and taste. The inclosures and adjacent meadows were animated with domestic poultry of all varieties and of the choicest breeds. Among these was an extraordinary assembly of peafowls—some forty or fifty in number—whereby hangs a tail.

I was warmly welcomed; the programme for the fishing expedition discussed and approved. The major winced a little, I thought, at the idea of starting so soon, but dared not suggest delay; at which I was gratified—not maliciously, I hope. The morning passed pleasantly in trifling with books, flowers, and music, running up into the belvedere to enjoy the views, admiring the immense, flower-spangled meadows and growing corn fields, like armies of green-coated soldiers marshaled in lines of endless perspective, armed with glittering blades and pikes; while the whistle of the partridge echoing from thicket to fence corner, the gobble of strutting turkeys, the drumming of pheasants on the hill-sides, the saw-filing notes of restless guinea-fowls, the jawing of impudent crows, and clarion squalling of the royal peacocks combined, in rustic harmony, to furnish music for the verdant hosts.

The dinner was profusely sumptuous, and passed off merrily. When it was over, the company gathered on the front porch to enjoy the freshness of the approaching evening. Poultry of various species were straying about the lawn—the mothers, with their young, busy in picking up their suppers of grains and insects; while the cocks were more generally occupied in mutual bickerings, boasting of their prowess, or in conceited strutting and displaying their gorgeous plumage in the sunlight.

Here, as every where else in the world, the eyes of the spectators, carelessly over-

looking the modestly attired, duty-loving class, were concentrated on a gorgeously appareled favorite of Juno, that seemed to be exaggerating his splendors for their especial admiration.

Those who would ignore the influence of dress and display in society must first eradicate one of the most controlling of human passions.

The ladies, not reasoning on the subject, understand these matters better than we do; and no woman will voluntarily permit an acquaintance to catch her at a disadvantage in this respect. Her delicate and unerring instinct appreciates the difference between the assured address and easy superiority (ever so politely concealed) of the gentleman who finds her *en papillote* and calico wrapper, with, perhaps, a duster in her hand, and the breathless reverence, partaking of awe, of the same to the same in the diamonds, lace, and trailing silks of the glittering saloon.

So the lordly peacock continued to strut, turning his plumed rainbow, now full, now slanting, to the sun, the more completely to dazzle the eyes of the admiring crowd, when, by chance, a brood of young turkeys passed in pursuit of a grasshopper. Suddenly he dropped his tail, lowered his blue, gleaming, snakey head, and struck the nearest fledgeling in the eye with his sharp bill.

The blow was mortal, but so sudden and noiseless that the little flock took no alarm. Advancing two or three steps, he struck another blow, as quick and deadly as that of a rifle-ball. At the first shot the company on



CASSY.

the porch were silent with curiosity and astonishment. At the second the hostess sprang up in excitement, exclaiming, "Run, husband! Stop him! You, Cassy, run instantly, and drive him away, or he'll murder the whole flock!"

"Let him alone," said the proprietor, watching the scene with a grim interest

that would have alarmed the peacock if he had had any brains. "Be quiet every one. I wish to satisfy myself fully on this subject."

As he spoke, another cruel rap, a faint peep, and a third turkeyling lay stretched upon the green. The hen-mother by this time had taken the alarm, and hastily called off the remainder of her family. The bodies of the victims were examined, and found to

be past all surgery. The pitiful hearts of the ladies were moved at the sight, and they expressed the deepest regret that their beautiful favorite should have had the heart to behave so rudely. The major laughed heartily. "It is only peacock nature. The young of the vulgar turkey so nearly resemble their own that they take it in dudgeon, and kill them whenever they meet."

"Is it common?"

"So common that you can scarcely succeed in raising them together," madam exclaimed, hastily: "that is why I have never been successful with my turkeys here. We hatched over seventy this spring, and now there are not more than twenty living."

"Jack," said the master, unbottling his indignation, "get my double-barreled shotgun. Gentlemen, if you will join me, we will have some uncommon sport."

At this grim announcement the younger ladies rose together, protesting and beseeching, but the master was courteously inexorable; and Mrs. Meadows, vacillating between pride and economy, remained neutral.

Meanwhile, seeing the gunners advance, the peafowls seemed to have caught the idea that something suspicious was brewing. They at first gathered together as if in consultation; then scattering, the cocks began to fly to the tops of the highest trees in the grove, while the hens dodged and hid themselves in the shrubbery and long grass.

The proprietor had kept his eye on the conceited murderer, whose evil deeds had brought his race to grief, and who was now looking down suspiciously from the top branches of a lofty locust.

"The death-shot parts," the feathers scattered, and down came the royal bird flashing through the air like a falling meteor. He struck the earth with a heavy thud, and then, with a prolonged scream, resembling a duet between a mule and a horse-fiddle, he spread every feather to its utmost stretch, pirouetting like a mad dervish, and reminding one of a blazing Catharine-wheel fifteen feet in diameter. He was presently enveloped in a whirlwind of dust and feathers, which rose to the tree-tops. Then the cry ceased, the cloud vanished, and there lay the dead peacock.

At the crack of the gun the ladies had raised their handkerchiefs and rushed into the house, while gunners, negroes, and dogs stood still and breathless until the appalling struggle ended.

The master then raised a feeble shout, which was gradually re-echoed by all the spectators and denizens of the farm-yard, but which sounded more like an effort to drown remorse than a paean of victory. Nevertheless, it served to animate the gunners, and at it they went. Bang, bang, bang—right and left, in the trees, on the wing, in the grass; there was no escape for such



princely game as this; the air was filled with flying feathers, whirling disks, and gleaming comets, accompanied by such a *charivari* of screams and yells as to deafen conscience and frighten sympathy.

Seeing the fate of the high-fliers, a portion of the doomed flock hurried away to the fields and thickets on foot. But the hunt was up, and away went negrolings and dogs to drive them from their hiding-places to meet the deadly fire of the gunners. Now at every shot there was a rush and outcry of frantic exultation from those who half an hour before were the most obsequious courtiers of the unhappy victims. Dogs that dared not even smell at a chance feather dropped by the way, negroes who took off their hats as they threw corn to the princely birds, now barked and yelled, mumbled and pelted, without mercy.

Indeed, I am not sure that in addition to their instinctive love of the chase, our hunters themselves were not stimulated by something of that iconoclastic fury against caste and privilege so deeply rooted in the human heart. And when the mingled mob of vulgar poultry followed us up with cackling, screeching, hissing, and gabbling to swell the triumphant chorus over the fallen aristocracy, one might almost swear he heard the historic cry of revolution—Down with the Bourbons! death to tyrants!

In less than an hour the *arrêt de mort* was executed, and the sun set upon the tragedy.

Each of us plucked a gorgeous panache as our trophy, hoping, at the same time, it might assist in making our peace with the ladies; then, flushed with the excitement of the novel sport, we returned to the house.

Mr. Meadows declared he had been for a long time annoyed by their abominable squalling, and was glad to have found an occasion against them; he was now satisfied.

The major said it reminded him of hunting in Ceylon, and that the entertainment was worthy of an Oriental nabob. Dick was delighted with the unusual experience. He had never shot peacocks before, and had no idea there was so much fun in it. Augustus spoke vaguely of the gloriousness of the sport.

In the parlor we were received as culprits rather than heroes, and even our plummy placeboes were rejected with a shudder. Mrs. Meadows inquired if we had killed them all, and being assured of it, said, with a sigh, "I believe I'd rather have lost all my turkeys." The younger ladies likewise refused to be comforted. Lilly Meadows declared it was cowardly to massacre the princely creature that could neither fight nor fly.

Here Augustus expressed his regret they had not been grizzly bears, and took occasion to avow that he had no peacock's blood on his conscience, as, not being skilled in the

use of fire-arms, he had loaded one barrel with shot and the other with powder. Although he bursted numerous caps on the first, it wouldn't go off, and the other—

"Shot away your ramrod," said Dick. "It whizzed by my head, but I hadn't time to speak of it."

To Miss Primrose it recalled the horrors of the French revolution.

"Tears on the French revolution may be quite appropriate, Miss Prue; but please dry up on the peacock question." Dick got this off pretty well, for second-hand.

The retort was dry enough. "It was not to be expected," she said, "that the geese and puppies should feel any commiseration for the fate of their superiors."

Turning from the crude sentimentality of the maidens, the major cast an inquiring look toward Rhoda, who sat gravely considering and arranging a superb fly-brush. The widow's pretty lip quivered as her dark eye glanced from one to the other of the gentlemen, who stood like criminals awaiting judgment.

"Perhaps," said she, "it is defensible in a purely utilitarian point of view; but does it not appear like sacrilege to destroy, in wanton sport, what God has made so exquisitely beautiful, and doubtless created for some wise and beneficent purpose? Is there nothing more elevated in life than the coarser objects of utility—no higher and nobler aims than eating, drinking, and vulgar sport? Has Beauty for itself alone no sacred rights and immunities which should command our respect?"

"Thunder and bomb-shells!" exclaimed the major, throwing up his hands in deprecation. "Fair lady, be merciful. I perceive that I have been a murderer—an atrocious being."

"You are a soldier, Major Martial."

"By George! I didn't know I was capable of being so much ashamed of myself," said Dick, with a ludicrous effort at contrition.

"The capacity does you credit, Mr. Rattle-brain; but you are a young and ardent sportsman."

"Am I, then, the only criminal for whom no apology is found?"

"You, Mr. Laureate, are a poet, whose profession is the worship of the Beautiful; how could you consistently engage in this cruel crusade?"

The distinction was sufficiently flattering, and my eagerness for justification overcame for the moment my habitual shyness.

"Indeed, madam, your eloquence and womanly tenderness are but wasted in the cause of these brainless birds, whose jeweled garments, stately trains, and traditional honors can hardly excuse their worthlessness, insolence, and crimes."

"The peacock is no native of this free and happy land; no representative of our moral



and intellectual advancement. An importation and an anomaly, he brings with him the characteristics of his Oriental origin, at once the cruellest of despots, the basest of slaves; of the climes where external splendors, barbaric pomp, and mere sensuous beauty are accustomed to take precedence of solid merit and true nobility of soul.

"In his history we may trace the progress of human society. Once it was his privilege to strut and spread himself among the gods. That stately virago who kept Olympus in a turmoil never moved without half a dozen peacocks in her train, or harnessed to her cloud-borne car.

"As society began to grow somewhat more practical, the heaven-descended fowl consented to walk in the parks of nobles, to roost on marble terraces, and, as a tough roast, to adorn the tables of royalty.

"Now, in the model republic of the nineteenth century, he lingers a meaningless relic, a despised tradition. We expel him from our poultry-yards, and make a fly-brush of his tail."

Here there was a round of applause. "Silence!" "Go on!"

"Indulge me with a few words more:

"The ideal of the poet's worship is not material, but spiritual; not the casket, but the priceless jewel it contains; not the chiseled alabaster of the vase, but the warm, living light within; and he that looks highest may find it incarnate, not in a peacock, but in God's last, best work, a true American—"

Fair Rhoda had listened, evidently pleased with the manliness and ingenuity of my defense of the unpopular cause, then prepared

gracefully to accept her share of the compliment wherewith I proposed to butter over the Western continent; but at the critical point I was interrupted by vociferous acclamations from the major and Dick. "Bravo! bravissimo! Larry Laureate! What a superior advocate! What a convincing argument! The peacocks are logically damned, and the judge smothered in compliments. Go on; don't spare her. Say her two eyes are well worth the hundred of the silly peafowl."

"Yes," cried Dick, "and her voice excels the whole flock put together."

"And she has certainly no occasion to be ashamed of her feet," chimed in Augustus.

"Really, gentlemen, you are remorseless with your wit, as with your fowling-pieces." So, laughing, but with a shadow of vexation, Rhoda bade us good-night, and retired.

I had commenced with the hope of making an impression, but was mortified at the absurd conclusion of the scene, and half inclined to be angry with my indiscreet allies.

"Laureate," said the major, confidentially, "you did that admirably. We owe you a thousand for relieving us."

"Oh, it's all gammon," said Dick, with an impudent wink. "She just put on that sentimental air to bring Mr. Laureate out. She said yesterday she was determined to make him talk, and so she has done it."

The unconscious whelp doubtless speaks the truth; and thus, like puppets, we all squeak and dance at her bidding—so demurely mischievous, so artlessly artful, so exquisitely graceful, withal. Well, no matter. To-morrow, thank Heaven, we start for the mountains.



# HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CCLXIV.—MAY, 1872.—VOL. XLIV.

THE MOUNTAINS.—II.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



THE YOUNG MOUNTAINEER.

"MONTANI semper liberi" is the motto of a new State, in accordance with the popular and poetic belief that Liberty finds her favorite abode in mountainous countries, although history would seem to

teach us that civil liberty has been generally better understood and maintained by the educated and enlightened populations of great commercial cities.

Nevertheless, as man always absorbs and

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872, by Harper and Brothers, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

VOL. XLIV.—No. 264.—51



reflects (chameleon-like) somewhat of the local color of his surroundings, we may readily perceive in the sights, sounds, and very smells of this rugged wilderness suggestions of a rude, instinctive independence, an individuality fiercely impatient of external control.

See how the mountains rear their bristling backs against the tyranny of plows and harrows—how their free torrents leap and foam in their rocky channels, shouting defiance to the fetters of dikes and dams, equally scornful of the burdens of commerce and the base drudgery of manufactures!

Here the arrowy trout flashes through transparent waters, leaping for his morning and evening meal, and sleeps at noonday in deep, shadowy pools, unvexed by hooks or nets. The wild turkey displays his green and golden plumage, strutting and gobbling in conceited majesty, unadmired except by silly hens, unscared but by the subtle fox. The red doe, with tender wildness, leads her speckled fawns through forests whose echoes have never been startled by the woodman's axe. From unshorn thickets the brindled wolf glares and watches, still preferring starvation to servitude.

Then how fresh and cooling come the earthy odors from damp beds of moss and springs trickling through fern-shaded rocks! How invigorating the aroma of crushed mint and pennyroyal by the way-side, fragrant hickory buds and spicy walnuts plucked from overhanging boughs! How royally refreshing the smell of cedar woods, hemlocks, and pines! And how balmy sweet the wild grapes blossom—a bouquet for a wood-nymph!

Amidst such surroundings the mountaineer is born and nurtured in poverty and seclusion. He has no set pattern to grow up by, with none of the slop-shops of civilization at hand to furnish him ready-made clothing, manners, or opinions. Rugged paths harden his baby feet; the chase of rabbits and ground-squirrels toughens his boyish sinews. Human nature, family traditions, and some hints from his fellow-denizens of the woods form the basis of his moral education, while his mother makes his breeches.

Simple but strong, uncouth but sincere, the man of the mountains knows nothing of the luxury and refinements of cities, and is equally protected from most of their attendant vices and miseries.

"A rifle for the red deer's speed,  
A rugged hand to cast the seed—  
With these their teeming huts they feed."

Without rivalry, he knows little either of envy or ambition; with nothing, he is rich in the independence arising from few and simple wants. Ignorant of Latin grammar, in his life he realizes the wisdom of Seneca:

"*Si ad naturam vivas, nunquam eris pauper;  
Si ad opinionem, nunquam dives.*"

At an early hour our mountaineering adventurers took leave of Meadlands, with promises to take care of themselves and to return as speedily as possible. In honor of our departure, all the ladies had appeared at breakfast except Rhoda, who had a headache—possibly feigned, as she showed herself at the chamber window, and waved a smiling salute to our cavalcade passing through the big gate.

The major was evidently annoyed at her non-appearance, and lingered until the last moment in vain. She I suspected of absentsing herself expressly to avoid the embarrassing effusions of leave-taking; and then, to prevent misunderstanding, as Dick Rattlebrain observed, fired a long-range smile at the flock.

But as the four horsemen cantered rapidly up the Petersburg Grade toward the grand mountain gate-way at the upper end of the valley, all regrets and discontents were forgotten in the present interest of the journey. We were all well mounted and equipped with fire-arms and fishing tackle, and on the stretch to take advantage of any sport or adventure which might offer. At a point six miles up we turned aside, opening a rail-fence, and riding through fields for half a mile or more to obtain a closer view of some curious rocks which attracted our attention from the road.

Inclosing one side of a pretty meadow rise a succession of conical hills or spurs, five in number, and of no great height, but each adorned with a Gothic façade, half detached, and formed by masses of stratified rocks



BAKER'S ROW.



standing perpendicularly on end, and exhibiting the most singular and fantastic outlines—a scene more easily described by pencil than by words.

Returning to the main road, we saw a large hawk sitting upon the branch of a dead tree overlooking a field of undergrowth.

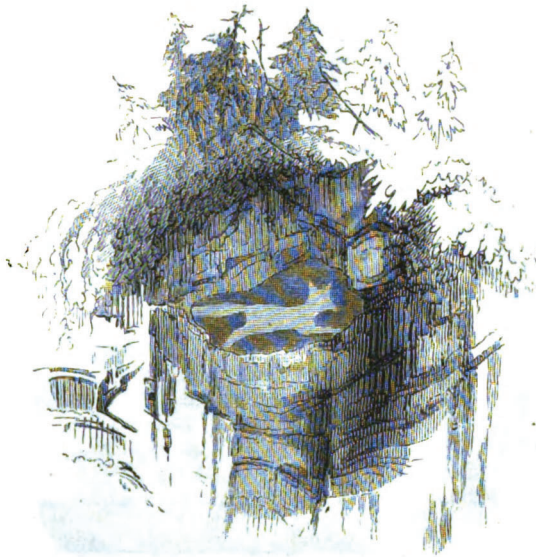
"That fellow," said the major, "is watching for a rabbit or a partridge; and as he is a vile pot-hunter, who would not hesitate to snatch a hen off her nest, we should give him a shot."

Augustus, who was nervously ambitious to mend his reputation as a sportsman, asked permission to try his hand on so fair a mark. As his fowling-piece was too light for such game, I proposed to lend him my rifle. With considerable difficulty he disentangled himself from the load of bags, pouches, knapsacks, pistols, fishing-rods, bear-skin, and old quilt he had strapped on his saddle. At length dismounted, he accepted my piece, and, under Dick's friendly but rather officious supervision, crept along the fence to get a convenient shot at the hawk.

The pony which Mr. Meadows had politely furnished him for the expedition was a spirited black, well trained to stand fire or any of the ordinary incidents of sporting life; but he was evidently not altogether satisfied with his present rider or the mountain of unusual trumpery upon his back, rolling his eyes suspiciously, and snorting at it from time to time.

Meanwhile the rifle cracked. The hawk darted from his perch, then sailed away majestically over the hills: from the direction of his recent perch a single feather was seen floating on the breeze. Augustus raised a shout of triumph. "Hurrah! I hit him! I hit him!" and throwing down the rifle, he ran with all his might across the field in pursuit of the feather. The pony, who had betaken himself to grazing, at this outcry raised his head, and in doing so caught a glimpse of some frightful shape, black and hairy, hanging over his side. He gave a succession of violent snorts and kicks, and then started at full speed down the road toward Moorfield, followed by a cloud of dust, and at every jump kicking some article of poor Cockney's equipage to the winds.

Dick, who witnessed the escapade, and appreciated the possible vexatious results to the company, immediately mounted and dashed off in pursuit. Being a bold rider, and having the fleetest horse, he soon over-



THE FOX.

took the runaway, and led him back by a remnant of the bridle, naked, foaming, and his eyes rolling like Toodles's in the play.

Augustus had come running in with the hawk's plume in his hat, and ready to vaunt his exploit, when he saw the wreck of all his cares and hopes—the tag end of a single rein being all that remained of his outfit.

As he looked ruefully from one to the other, his comrades restrained their laughter, and kindly set about assisting him to repair damages. One of the major's double reins was fitted to the headstall, still available, and the black again had a bridle. Dick very good-naturedly searched the fence corners and thickets which bordered the road for a mile back, and gathering up a stirrup here, a pad there, and a jagged girth hanging on a bush, was ingenious enough to fit up an imitation of a saddle therewith. Gus also recovered a pistol, his fishing-rod case, with one or two joints missing, and an extra coat, with a horseshoe mark cut through the back. For the rest, the major declared he was luckily delivered from his superfluous impedimenta, and would travel lighter for the loss. This *contre-temps* rather subdued Mr. Cockney's hilarity, but did not quite extinguish his gratification at having made his bullet-mark upon the hawk, and won his first trophy of the chase.

Again in motion, we forded the South Branch at a point where the stream makes its way through the tremendous jaws of the Petersburg Gap. The scenery here is grand and impressive in a high degree; but as it may be considered only a modest gate-way to an extensive exhibition of greater sublimities, we must reserve our canvas and our ex-





"MUSTN'T GRAB."

clamation points. Yet we risk giving great offense to the neighborhood should we omit to mention the singular resemblance of a fox "courant" painted on the face of a cliff by the plastic hand of nature.

From the pass toward Petersburg we look over an open and cultivated country, and the straggling dwellings of the cheerful little village, fascinated by the gloomy and massive grandeur of the mountains towering beyond.

Arriving at Petersburg about noon, and finding the house of entertainment more comfortable than we anticipated, we concluded to remain until the following morning, which delay would afford our unlucky companion the opportunity of refitting and repairing.

The mistress of our hostelry was a buxom dame, somewhat fussy and pretentious, but comely withal, and mother of a group of hearty children, whose faces were washed every morning, and whose manners were especially regulated at meals. Between times they wiped their noses on the guests' coat tails, and followed around, chirping, "Gimme a cent; gimme a cent."

Petersburg is located on the main South Branch, eleven miles southwest of Moorfield, and on the graded road to Franklin, the county seat of Pendleton County. Like many other little towns in these parts, there seems to be no adequate reason for its existence;

but we suppose it accumulated for neighborhood convenience around a blacksmith shop and a mill, developing in the course of time a tavern, a meeting-house, a couple of stores, a hundred or two of inhabitants, and finally a post-office.

After dinner, as one picks his teeth on the tavern porch, he feels as if he had drifted out of the current of life into one of those little eddies where the waters have an opportunity to settle, leaving the chips and bubbles on the surface floating round and round in slow circles, moving but never advancing.

In the great world people have no time to think. He who stops to think is jostled into the gutter or crushed by the locomotive. Somebody

gets the office he thought of applying for, or buys the property he was thinking might be a good speculation, or marries the girl he was dreaming of so fondly, or gets a patent for the invention he has perfected at leisure.

Here people have ample time to think profoundly, to study, scheme, plan, and do nothing, which they generally accomplish. It was doubtless an ancient pedagogue in one of these little eddying pools who first set the copy which we have been transcribing from time immemorial, "Still waters are commonly deepest." Now the fact is, streams are deepest where the strong, active current scoops out a channel and keeps it clear, while the placid eddies, profoundly reflecting the stars and clouds, are filled up with mud—disappointingly shallow. Throw out your conversational angle, and if you get a nibble strong enough to sink your cork, your catch will be only a "triton among the minnows."

To while away the afternoon I lounged over to the nearest store, and bought some trifling article to excuse the visit. As business did not appear to be very brisk, I asked the clerk some questions concerning the route to the Big Plains, which we proposed to visit next day. He knew nothing about it; but a thin, seedy-looking customer, with a pragmatical air, volunteered the required information, and showed a willingness to engage in general conversation.



THE SCHOOL-MASTER.

He commenced by delicately ruffling the surface of political questions several years of age; hinted his own doubts as to the constitutionality of certain governmental measures which had been repealed and forgotten. He then mounted Napoleon Bonaparte, who was evidently his hobby, and rode him through his whole career, making queer work with the pronunciation of European proper names. He then indicated his acquaintance with current British literature by quoting Walter Scott, Shakspeare, Pope, and Goldsmith. The ancients were introduced in their turn, and the speaker inveighed bitterly against the cattle-dealers, and even certain stuck-up professional men,

for their neglect of literary merit and want of appreciation of scholarship, pointing his remarks by a sarcastic quotation from a well-known classic author, "*Dum gallus vertit stercorem, invenit gemmam*," etc. He repeated the whole fable like a school-boy saying his lesson, and concluded with a conceited wink and, *sotto voce* to myself, "We educated gentlemen understand these things," then a contemptuous toss of his head toward the clerk signifying the reverse.

Wishing to close the conversation in a friendly manner, I requested the clerk to set out his bottle, which he did civilly, only winking and flinging out a curt re-



mark in passing, of which I caught but the one word, "Blatherskite"—a painful proof of the lack of appreciation complained of by the jewel. After drinks, with a profusion of stately bows, I took leave, under the impression that I had been talking with a country school-master.

Returning to our inn, I found Cockney in jolly spirits. The village saddler had renovated his equipment thoroughly and substantially, and a drover, coming up by the Moorfield Grade, had gathered up and returned to him a pair of gauntlets, the bear-skin housing, and several items of his lost baggage. He considered himself the luckiest fellow in the world, and proffered a reward of double the value of the restored goods, which the drover civilly declined.

Dick had got hold of an old cracked fiddle, and, at the expense of a dime each, hired three or four little negroes to dance to his obstreperous music. Half a dozen dogs were howling gratuitously.

The major presented me to Doctor Didiwick, a red-headed, stuttering, eccentric individual, who was going up toward Yeokem's on a professional tour, and would ride with us. This was fortunate, as the road we contemplated traveling was very obscure and difficult, and the country not an agreeable one to get lost in.

The doctor also counseled us to provide against all contingencies on to-morrow's journey; so we ordered our hostess to have prepared a ham, a sack of biscuit, and some bottles of cold tea—this last, by-the-way, a most excellent beverage for wayfaring people.

After supper, hearing a mighty and continuous thumping in the direction of the kitchen, I thought it advisable to look in and give some special directions about the biscuit, which should be well beaten and thoroughly baked to prevent their getting mouldy.

Opening a door, I stepped out on the back porch, and, to my astonishment, caught the doctor pelting and pounding at a batch of dough. The dough looked rather dark, to be sure, and the doctor slightly embarrassed; but, not to be ceremonious, I said,

"Really, doctor, this is very considerate in you to make the biscuit for us yourself."

"What b-b-b-biscuit?" he stuttered, surprised and offended. "Go to the c-c-c-cook. I'm making blue-pills for my patients to-morrow."

"In the name of *Æsculapius*, how many do you make at a time?"

"Oh," said he, "a p-p-p-peck, more or less. Practice in these mountains is different from your city practice. I make my rounds only once a month, and it takes a week's riding to get through, so that I have to provision a whole district to last until I come again."

In the morning we were on the road betimes, all in fine spirits except Cockney, who

was a little sore from yesterday's ride, but did his best not to mind it.

The country was wild and rugged enough, but more populous than we had imagined. The doctor called at every house, and at his familiar halloo all the inmates, from the hobbling centenarian to the toddling yearling, flocked out to greet him. He inquired after their welfare, physical and moral, in a most kind and fatherly manner, naming such as had been ailing at his last visit. Having audited all their complaints, he would leave one or two tea-cupfuls of pills and ride on. Sometimes he took the trouble to dismount and enter the cabin of some bedridden patient; at others he would simply inquire concerning a family living far back in the woods, and leave a measure of pills to be sent over next Sunday. Occasionally he had the luck to meet a customer on the road, and delivered his monthly allowance on the spot. The doctor was evidently honored and beloved by the whole country, and consulted on all questions that arose, in law, agriculture, or politics. He was a sturdy Democrat, and dispensed gratuitous opinions on this subject as freely as he did his blue-pills. He stuttered sarcastically against medical quacks, and thought the laws were not sufficiently severe against them. Some years ago a so-called herb doctor came poaching upon his domain, and was a great grief of mind to him. The fellow was civil and wouldn't quarrel, but secretly undermined the regular practitioner, was getting all his patients, and ruining the health of the district.

The interloper had two weaknesses—he was fond of backgammon, and hated snakes. Didiwick cared no more for snakes than he did for fishing worms, so he took all opportunities to bedevil his rival with practical jokes in which serpents played a leading part.

One day he challenged the herb doctor to a game of backgammon. Pleased with the unusual civility, he accepted, and seated himself at the table where the box lay closed before him. The tavern loungers, aware that something was up, gathered round to witness the game.

"Set the board, doctor," said Didiwick, "while I go to order two juleps."

The doctor opened the board, and a six-foot black-snake leaped out into his face. He fled, and returned no more.

"And so I got rid of the cursed humbug before he killed off my whole district."

"I say, Hezekiah, how's your mammy by this time?"

"Wa'al, I dunno, doctor. She's jist peakin' around jist about the same, and don't git no better—ah."

"Well, just take her this handful of pills that I'm leaving on the flat end of this fence-rail, and tell her to take two three times a week until I come round again."



GAMMONED.

"Yes, doctor, I'll tell her: three two times a week—ah."

"Yes, that's right. Be sure you mind what I tell you."

At Roby's we halted, and lunched on our own provisions, with the addition of some butter and bonny-clabber furnished by the house.

Here the doctor took leave of us to follow his regular beat. As he rode off Dick held out his cup, and shouted after him, "Halloo, doctor, can't you spare us a pint or so of your pills? If we get sick, and have nothing to depend on but these mountain herbs, it might go hard with us."

The doctor hallooed back, "Young man, I'll insure your life without medicine. You're too useful an agent for your best friend to be prematurely removed."

After an hour's rest we mounted, and pushed on toward Yeokem's. There was some very imposing scenery by the way, which we disregarded in our anxiety to reach our destination before nightfall.

By steady riding we succeeded, and just as the last roseate tint had faded from the sky we heard the welcome baying of the hounds, and saw the lights in the mountain cabins. The sentinel dogs having alarmed the garrison, half a dozen of Yeokem's boys met us at the gate, took our horses, and escorted us to the house, upon the threshold of which the patriarch stood to welcome us.

He was a tall, gaunt figure, with a compact head, curled and grizzled, with a slight stoop in the shoulders, sinewy and weather-beaten, but still in the prime of manhood. His dress was the pioneer woodman's hunting-shirt of tawny jeans, with belt, cape, and

fringes complete, and pantaloons to match. His address was cheerful, bordering on the facetious, yet not without a touch of proprietary dignity. He had expected our coming, and was glad to see us—wanted us to know there were mountaineers rougher in their manners than he was, and would take pleasure in introducing us to his nearest neighbors, the bucks and bears, and hoped we would like each other's society.

At this he laughed, the boys laughed, the women listening at the kitchen door laughed, and, in brief, we all laughed, and felt very much at home. He then presented a guest with whom he had just supped—a cattle-dealer from the South Branch, who had come up to make purchases.

It was warm even in the mountains, so we sat outside in front of the house, with no light but the moon and the stars, and talked pleasantly until supper was announced. We were then ushered into the kitchen, where a substantial meal smoked upon the board.

The host asked a blessing, and we engaged without further ceremony.

When country folks go to New York, and have the luck to get an invitation to dine at Delmonico's or the Grand Central, they take care to send home a bill of fare, that their fellow-rustics may see how magnificently they are enjoying themselves. In return we will describe our mountain supper, that city gourmands may lick their chops.

Old apple-jack, sweetened with honey or maple-sugar, was served as an appetizer to those who needed or imagined they needed it. The meats were fried chicken, fried mutton bones, fried ham-and-eggs. The breads, all piping hot, biscuits, corn pone, and heavy



HEZEKIAH.



cake. Milk in various forms abounded, including cheese, curds, buttermilk, and sweet milk, with butter fresh, firm, and fragrant. Better was never churned.

Then came the inevitable sauces and sweetenings. Apple-butter, pear-butter, plum-butter, and wild-grape-butter—this latter the most piquant of all the mountain sauces used with meats or on hot bread-and-butter. Maple-molasses and honey, with coffee sweetened therewith, closes the list. No shams, but every thing true to name, except perhaps the last-named beverage.

After supper we returned to our open-air seats, where we had pipes and conversation, and discussed the character and resources of the country. In the twenty and odd miles we had traveled that day we had counted five meeting-houses and one camp-meeting ground.

The inhabitants of this region were, indeed, rude and unlettered, but generally thrifty, independent, and devout frequenters of Sunday meetings. Their isolation from the world and each other had nurtured a strong individualism, which made them unmanageable in matters of faith, and there was a great variety of sects, schismatics, and eccentrics among them.



A SCHISMATIC.

There is noble timber in the country, which, on account of its distance from market, is a hinderance rather than an advantage. The soil, where in an arable location, is very strong, and where cleared produces native timothy. The tastes and occupations of the people are consequently all pastoral, like the lowlanders, and some of them, like our entertainer, comparatively wealthy. We suggested the advantage of railroads in opening up the resources of the country and increasing the value of lands.

The patriarch became excited, and somewhat disgusted. Railroads, he thought, were an invention of the arch enemy; they would ruin the price of land, and, in consequence,

people couldn't buy any more when they wanted it. They would also double the taxes, which were high enough already. They killed and stampeded people's cattle, and would ruin a man in fences to keep his flocks and herds inclosed. They induced folks to travel too much, when they had better be at home minding their business. In fine, they introduced all manner of new-fangled deviltries, which were clearly agin Scripture.

We hastened to relieve his mind by showing that the nature of his locality effectually excluded the possibility of his ever being disturbed, but prophesied that the South Branch Valley (of which he was rather jealous) would one day suffer under the accumulated afflictions he had described. This roused the lowlander, who declared when that day came he would sell out and leave the valley. This was satisfactory, and we all went to bed.

Next morning was fresh and bracing, and we walked about to view the premises.

The locality was as fine as could be imagined for a patriarchal domain—a broad and fertile plateau or highland meadow, two thousand feet or more above the sea-level, and five miles from the nearest neighbor. The open ground sloped gradually to the southeast, in front a sparkling trout stream running through an extensive and stately grove of sugar-maples. Behind rose the primeval forest, massive and gloomy, and above it, grinning in savage majesty, the bare, rocky face of the Alleghany Ridge.

In the midst of a grassy inclosure of several acres in extent stood the patriarch's dwelling, with its numerous supplementary buildings forming a grand semicircle.

The main house consisted of two rude cabins of logs, chinked and daubed, united by a boarded room, which served as the entrance and vestibule, and also contained a ladder-way to the lofts, all of which were the lodging apartments. The line of huts on the right contained the kitchen, meat-house, wash-house, dairy, and spring-house, poultry-house, pig-pens, and stables. On the left a similar line was occupied by the various workshops—a spinning and weaving room, a tannery, saddlery, and shoe shop, a smithy, a cider-press and apple-jack distillery, a carpenter and wagon-maker's shop, a saw-mill outside the inclosure, on the stream, and a grist-mill a little below. A hut containing a family of negro servants stood modestly in the rear of the main building, and the grain and cattle barn in an adjoining field.

In the fields the cereals were growing prosperously; there were grass and hay in the meadows, a fruitful apple orchard stood behind the house, and a well-cultivated kitchen-garden in front. The maple grove was a sugar camp, and the wild forests furnished abundance of chestnuts, hickory nuts,

and walnuts, and berries in their season. There were beeves in the pastures, sheep on the hills, pigs and poultry of all sorts roaming at large, bee-hives on a stand in the garden, wild game in the woods, and fish in the stream.

Six stout sons did the father's bidding, and among them possessed sufficient skill in mechanics to run all the shops and mills. One buxom, black-eyed daughter, with hirelings and dependents, managed the domestic departments, including butter and cheese making, spinning, weaving, sewing, and knitting.

In short, this primitive establishment embraced within itself not only all the facilities and conveniences for domestic living, but all the natural products and essential arts and manufactures (except an iron furnace) to insure wealth and independence either to a family or a state.

As the natural result of full barns and larders, combined with sweet woman's softening influences, the germs of taste for flowers and ornamentation were also visible, all the more touching for the quaint and artless manner of the exhibition. In front of the cabin and garden fence were ranged a number of long logs, scooped out and elevated on legs, originally used as feeding troughs for cattle, now filled with rich wood-earths, and planted with trailing vines and gay-colored flowers. The window-sills and unsightly stumps in the yard were also decorated with flower vases, made of rude boxes, segments of hollow trees, and broken crocks and pitchers.

Yeokem, apologizing somewhat loftily for the delay of breakfast, informed us that lately his "old woman had drapped off onexpectedly, and left things rather upside down."

The patriarch's only daughter, who served at table with a singular mingling of wild shyness and laughing assurance, a dash of attractive petulance and humorous repartee—showing the spoiled child newly invested with domestic authority—upsetting the skill



THE PATRIARCH'S DAUGHTER.

let and spilling the coffee, laughing thereat, and slapping pappy on the back when he looked dignified—she was evidently the motive and mistress of these flowers.

At breakfast Yeokem politely informed us that he would be engaged all day looking after cattle with his South Branch visitor, but his son John would do the honors of the mountain.

John, a merry, keen-eyed fellow of about twenty, undertook the duty with great alacrity. He promptly got the horses out, had a lunch packed, shouldered his rifle, and mounted, ready for the road.

At this point Mr. Cockney, who had been silent and malingering all morning, frankly acknowledged his inability to travel, and proposed to stay behind and rest until we returned. He was kindly excused, and Dick, with his usual forwardness, commended him to the special care of the young lady. She replied, smartly, that Dick himself looked as if he wasn't used to being away from home, and needed some one to wash his face and comb his head.

As Richard had been remiss at his toilet that morning the joke hit, and slightly nettled him. He retorted by saying she deserved a kiss for her smartness. "And,"



said she, "mister, you deserve a hug for your impudence, and I wish you may git one from the biggest bear on the plains." Seeing our champion was getting the worst of it, we withdrew him, and rode off laughing.

After a rough ride of several miles through dense forests, and climbing steep and rocky paths scarcely practicable for horses, we at length reached the base of a naked precipice of considerable height, which seemed to bar our progress absolutely. Dismounting, however, at the instance of our guide, we followed him, leading our horses, up a path like a stairway cut in the face of the cliff.

With much difficulty and some risk we reached the top, and found ourselves on the Big Plains of the Alleghany, the goal of our journey from Petersburg. We had frequently heard this locality alluded to in Moorfield as a good hunting-ground for bears, and well worth visiting otherwise, but all attempts at description had so entirely failed to convey any adequate idea of its aspect that, on looking around, we were thrilled with a novel emotion.

After remaining silent for an unusual space, Dick Rattlebrain expressed the result of his observations in three words, "Devilish queer place."

Recovering from my astonishment, I endeavored to note its peculiarities more methodically. Here the main ridge, or backbone, of the Alleghany Mountains, looking eastwardly, presents a singularly uniform and unbroken rampart of rocky precipices of several hundred feet in height, and extending in either direction as far as the eye can reach.

This summit is estimated at between three and four thousand feet above the ocean tides, and your first astonishment is in recognizing the fact that you are overlooking all the region through which you have traveled—your long and toilsome days' journeys measured by the eye like distances on a map; the imposing mountain heights, which, viewed from below, awed by their immensity, now grovel at your feet, mere subordinate ridges and projecting spurs, scarcely breaking the uniformity of the geographical landscape. This is the look-out eastward.

Now we turn to view the plains themselves—a vast level summit many miles in length, and sloping gradually back from the sharp eastern edge. At a distance of one, two, or three miles it is terminated by dark, massive forests of fir and hemlock. The surface reminds one of an old-fashioned cobble-stone pavement, but the boulders with which it is laid are cyclopean, of coarse conglomerate, their weight estimated by the ton. The interstices are partially filled in with springy mattresses of moss, and a stunted growth of huckleberry bushes bearing fruit by handfuls, of extraordinary size, and the especial delight of bears. The bleak monoton-

ony of the scene is pointed by an occasional stack of boulders, and a few straggling, skeleton-like firs, with their meagre limbs all pointing east and south toward the sun, as if frantically beseeching his aid against the tyrannical nor'wester which sweeps the plains with blasting power.

Measurements of distance by the eye we found as unreliable here as on the plains of ocean. The stalk of a dead huckleberry bush was sometimes mistaken for a tall fir-tree in perspective, while objects that seemed near were miles and miles away.

Thus looking over the plains toward the gloomy hemlock bordering on the west, we espied a diminutive black object creeping like a caterpillar over the boulders, alternately rising to view and disappearing with the inequalities of the surface. It might have been an insect; but, allowing for ocular deception, one guessed it might be a mink; another supposed it a little dog. John Yeokem, however, having considered the moving object for several minutes, exclaimed, with a bounce, "Hit's a bar!"

In spite of the guide's warning, we immediately rushed for our horses, handled our arms, and started in the direction of the game. But before the foremost man had made the eighth of a mile we had concluded this was no country for fast horses. At every step the animals stumbled and slid over the rounded rocks, sometimes sinking to their girths in the treacherous intervals concealed by moss and bushes; every movement involved both horse and rider in a joint risk of life or limb. We gave it up, dismounted, and listened to John Yeokem.

He advised we should hitch our horses where they stood, and take it afoot. He would slip around to the Stack Rocks—a pile of boulders overlooking the plain, and from thence make signals to direct our movements. Meanwhile we might lie low, or advance cautiously, showing ourselves as little as possible, lest the bear should see us and turn back. There was no risk of alarm by sounds or scent, as the driving wind was directly in our faces.

The tremor being over, we speedily arranged the plan of battle. Major Martial, with the coolness of a veteran and the courtesy of a gentleman, had yielded the first shot, and even offered me the advantage of his heavy rifle. But we both knew the major was an experienced sportsman; I was painfully subject to the buck ague; and Dick's solicitude to secure the game for our party overcame his usual forwardness. So Major Martial must take the lead, while Rattlebrain and myself would follow at about fifty paces distance. Should his shot fail, or only disable the enemy, I was to deliver my fire, while Dick volunteered to "slither" the beast with his bowie-knife if he showed fight, and we couldn't kill him with our guns.



THE STACK ROCKS, BIG PLAINS OF ALLEGHANY.



The half-creeping march was slow and fatiguing enough, but the stimulus of expectancy kept us bravely up to our work. The excitement increased as we saw our guide appear on the Stack Rocks and point forward with a rapid and significant gesture. Not long before we had been shivering with cold; now I was in a swelter, and observed the beads of perspiration dropping from my comrade's face.

We could see the major methodically picking his way among the rocks and bushes, sometimes glancing toward the signal-post, then closely scanning his limited horizon of boulders. Suddenly he halted, leveled his

piece, and instantly there was a puff of white smoke whiffed away by the wind, accompanied by a light report like the bursting of a cap. I thought his piece had missed fire, until I saw Yeokem drop from his perch and come skipping like a grasshopper over the rough pavement.

I then rushed forward, with my rifle cocked and my nerves strung up to perfect coolness. Rattlebrain made an unlucky start, and, pitching head-foremost, disappeared in a grove of huckleberry bushes.

I found the major standing coolly reloading his piece. He pointed to a boulder about forty paces distant, stained with some spots

of blood, while the bushes behind it were shaking violently.

"No nonsense, Mr. Laureate; you should wait until I load; no nonsense. Halt!" he cried, in a voice of command.

But my blood was up, and I rushed forward and mounted the rock. Immediately behind it was a huge bear, wallowing in the agonies of death, with a ball through his brain. I had quickly leveled my rifle, but reserved my fire for an emergency. The major stood beside me with his gun half loaded.

"You were rash," said he; "but I compliment you on your coolness. You didn't waste your fire."

By this time Dick was up, his face red and bleeding, his rifle broken, and his bowie-knife flashing in his hand. "Where is he? where is he?" he exclaimed, fiercely.

"What has happened?" said the major; "you look as if you had had a bout with something already, and got the worst of it."

Here Rattlebrain vented his vehement impatience by blasting all the rocks on the mountains.

The major replied, quaintly, "You waste your time trying to blast these boulders; they will neither bore nor split."

"I wish the devil had them!" cried Dick; "they've split my head." But casting his eyes on the body of the bear, his maledictory resolved into a round of cheering, hearty and triumphant.

"Major," said John Yeokem, "you done that thing middlin' smart. Hit's went in jist atwixt his two eyes, hit did."

The bear was dead, but the disposal of such a piece of game requires consideration. So our guide went back to the horses, and returning with the tin lunch-bucket, conducted us to a spot where we found a stream of delicious water issuing from an extensive cranberry thicket, and flowing westward.

This was one of the sources of the Ohio, but, unmindful of its mighty destiny, we unceremoniously straddled it while laving our chafed hands and heated brows. Then we sat down to lunch. For ever and for evermore the supreme hour of human existence is at the feast which follows the successful chase—the wassail after the victory.

After dinner, the major, Dick, and the mountaineer went to look after the bear, while I wandered alone over to the Stack Rocks, where, seated on the sunny side, protected from the wind, I endeavored to study more closely the peculiar æsthetic characteristics of the place. The air was genially tonic—so rarefied that all sounds seemed piping. Even the voice of the driving nor-wester was diminished to a thin whistle.

The trees and shrubs had an emaciated look, and all objects, far and near, were defined with a sharpness of outline which gave a hard-hearted character to the scene. Snow

and ice would have added dramatic brilliancy, but could not have equaled the effect of the cold, cruel, gray desolation. The sense of altitude was also pervading. The horizons in every direction cut sharp and clear against the clouds which floated high over the world beneath. There was nothing above us—nothing except the blue-black firmament, into whose limitless profundity it was frightful to look. The sense of loneliness and isolation was oppressive. Had Dante but seen these awful plains, he would have added a new horror to his "Inferno," and dedicated them to the selfish souls of the ambitious.

Happier he whose lot is staked out in some warm and pleasant valley, with limited horizons. Ah, sweet Rhoda—

"Halloo! come and help us to carry the bear!"

The idea was sociable and agreeable, so I joined the hunters and laid hold of one of Bruin's paws. They had disemboweled him to lighten weight, and concluded to carry him home whole. The character of the road made him a heavy drag, but having reached the edge, the body was packed on Yeokem's horse, who carried it safely down, and thence homeward the route was comparatively easy.

We arrived about sunset, and great was the jollification over our prize. The major's trophy, the hide, was neatly taken off and stretched in the tannery, to be finished and sent to him at Moorfield.

Miss Betsy, observing Dick's scratched and scarred face, mischievously inquired if he hadn't got that hug she recommended. He took the joke as a challenge, and offered to kiss her, in lieu of which he got a box which recalled his collision with the boulder. But rough jokes are current in the mountains, and every thing passed off good-humoredly.

Cockney was desolated at having missed the hunt, but elated generally at the success. He had had his own especial adventures during the day, and related them without reserve, as he wanted both counsel and encouragement.

Feeling a little squeamish about dinner-time, he had modestly requested to have some tea prepared. The women stared at each other and then fell a giggling.

"The man wants tea! What sort of tea, mister? Boneset or sassafrac?"

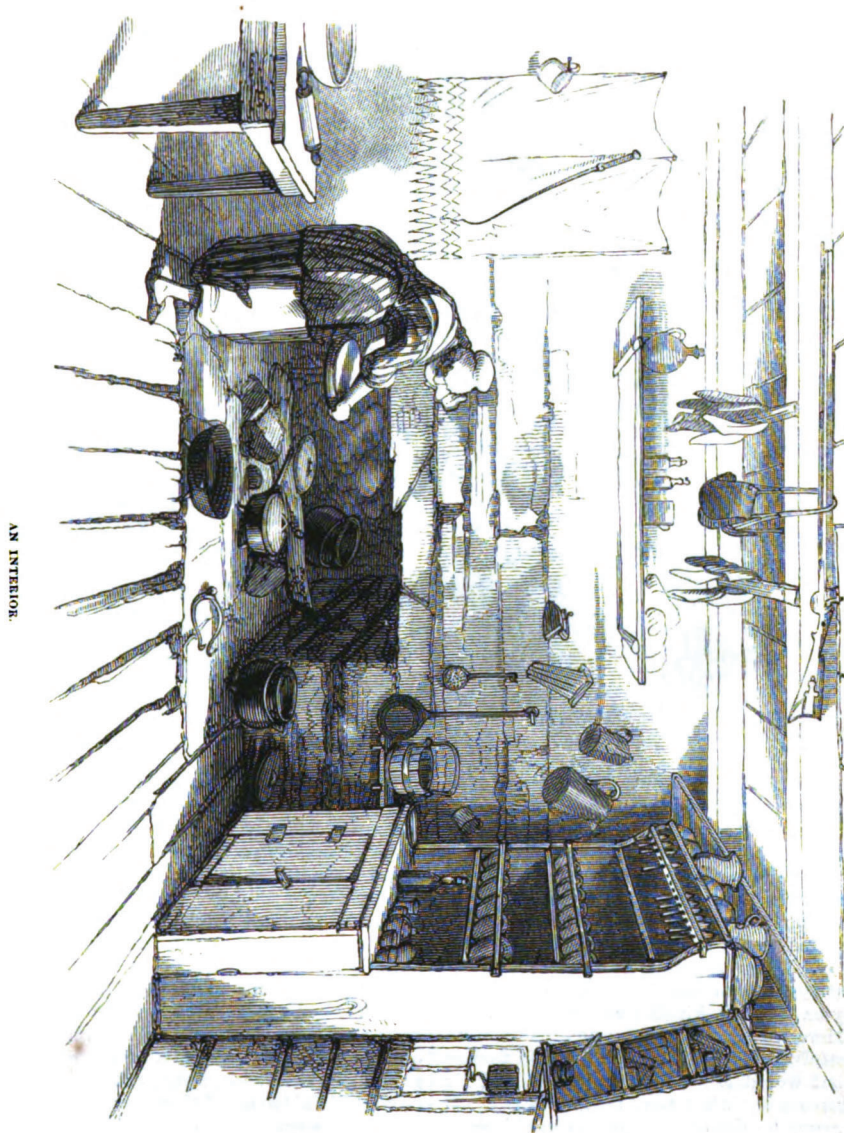
Augustus was bewildered at these unwonted names, and replied, "Oh, nothing but a cup of plain green tea."

"Oh! then you want sage or winter-green?"

Augustus was not enlightened. Well, green or black—either would do; he wasn't particular.

The women were at their wits' end, and consulted the patriarch. They didn't know whether he had a sore throat—then sage





AN INTERIOR.

and honey were good; but if he wanted a sweat, it was boneset certain.

"Oh, git out with your sweats and your sore throats," said Yeokem, contemptuously. "The man wants store tea." So he rose and fumbled between the logs of the cabin wall, soliloquizing, "I certainly did fetch some up from Moorfield when the old woman first begin to git shaky; but she had no stomach for the stuff, so I put it away."

Presently he pulled out a paper and opened it.

"Oh, these is pumpkin seeds!"

Another contained rifle powder, a third trout hooks, a fourth Glauber's-salt. After

trying a dozen papers, more or less, he finally opened one containing about a tea-spoonful of dried green leaves.

"Look here, gals. Ain't this hit?"

They didn't know, and Augustus was called to give an opinion.

"Oh yes!" he exclaimed, joyfully; "that's it; very fine too. So you'll be kind enough to make me a cup."

"Certainly, as many as you like;" and at dinner a portion of the tea was served in a gallon coffee-pot filled.

Feeling refreshed by his favorite beverage, Mr. Cockney thought he would beguile the afternoon by walking out a short distance



OLD APPLE-JACK.

with his fowling-piece, taking care to keep in sight of the highway.

He had not gone far before he was flurried by the sight of a flock of turkeys in the woods. He was so excited that his first barrel was inadvertently discharged in the air. He cocked the second, however, leveled his piece, shut both eyes, and blazed away. When he looked again, there, within twenty paces of him, lay a magnificent turkey on its back, kicking and flouncing.

Here was indeed a triumph, his first successful shot, and the prize a noble turkey. What would the major and Dick and Mr. Laureate say when they returned?

Augustus shouldered his gun and his game and hastened back to the house.

When he presented himself at the kitchen door with his wild turkey, there was a general gathering of the women, boys, and dependents, a staring at each other and lifting up of hands in mute astonishment, then a shrill voice exclaiming, "Well, if the man hain't shot our old yaller gobbler!"

Overwhelmed with confusion, Augustus began to apologize and explain. He had found the turkeys running in the woods, far away from the house, and mistook them for wild ones.

The explanation excited a hurrah of laughter. "A wild turkey! Why, man, he's yaller!"

In the midst of it the patriarch came out and joined the laugh vociferously. Slapping his guest heartily upon the back, he said, "Well, I reckon you never see a wild turkey in all your life, mister, least it might be a roasted one."

Cockney acknowledged that he had not, and insisted on paying for the gobbler he had killed.

Seeing the young man's mortification, the host checked the giggling with a look and gesture, declined the payment offered by observing, contemptuously, of the deceased gobbler, "He wasn't worth nothin' nohow; he was gittin' too old;" then good-humoredly went into some details on the subject of turkeys. "Wild turkeys," said he, "are always of a rusty black, and don't show any white about 'em. They are, moreover, a monstrous shy bird, and you seldom git a nigh shot at 'em except by chance. Now if we was to breed the dark brown kind, hit would be mighty hard to tell 'em apart, specially in the brush; so, to prevent our neighbors and our own selves from makin' mistakes, we mountain folks mostly breed the white and yaller colored, so as to know 'em at first sight. But hit's of no account whatsoever, mister." And so Augustus was at the same time consoled and instructed.

There was a drizzling rain next day, and being somewhat fatigued with our adventure



on the plains, the company agreed to lay over and rest.

The time passed pleasantly, talking woodcraft and mountaineering with our host and his boys, and an occasional neighbor who dropped in to visit them or transact some business.

Indeed, the accumulation of conveniences in one locality made it a common resort for the country from ten miles around. One called to get his horse shod; a second had broken his plow or wagon; a third wanted a roll of leather, some gearing repaired, and his wife's shoes, a fourth rode in upon an empty bag for flour or meal; a fifth desired some clapboards to roof his cabin; a sixth to drive a bargain for a calf or steer; and so on to the end of the catalogue. I was, however, struck with the singularity of the fact that nobody came for apple-jack, yet nobody departed without a well-filled jug.

Yeokem and all his house had a peculiar gift for entertaining agreeably. Unsuspicious, intelligent, amiable, full of jokes and waggery, they had nothing of that shyness which mars the social enjoyment of those who live apart from the world, nothing of that vulgar jealousy and pretension fostered in cities. They had around them the best of every thing the land afforded, and had never lived in the presence of their superiors—the magnates of the mountains, who envied none, and yielded precedence to none, except the stranger guest, who might command every thing by the right of hospitality.

When we came to take leave, our flasks and haversacks were filled to plethora, and our offers of remuneration declined—not awkwardly, or with affected disdain, but smothered out by good-humored raillery and genial invitations to come again and stay as long as we liked.

#### MR. JEFFERSON'S PET.

IT was a bright, sunny day, such as the Indian summer is apt to bring to our favored land, when, in the little town of Charlottesville, a solemn meeting was held by its most influential citizens. They had assembled to consult about the expediency of reviving a modest country school, known under the somewhat ambitious name of the Albemarle Academy, which had originally been endowed out of the spoils of the old church establishment, but was no longer able to support itself. The worthy men who had taken the matter in charge, partly with a view to the needs of that portion of the State, which was growing rapidly in wealth and intelligence, and stood sadly in want of a good school, partly with an eye to their own interest, were much at a loss how to organize a satisfactory scheme. They were on the point of abandoning the plan, when one of them descried afar off the tall form of a horseman rapidly coming down the public road that led from an eminence called Carter's Mountain into the village. He was superbly mounted on a thorough-bred horse, and managed it with the perfect ease of a consummate rider who has been familiar with horseback exercise from childhood up. As he came nearer the stately proportions of his frame became more and more distinct, and even the fire of his clear blue eye could be discerned under his broad-brimmed hat. He was clad from head to foot in dark gray broadcloth of homely cut, while his noble open countenance was rising with a firm and self-poised expression from an immense white cravat in which his neck was swathed. Fast as he came, it was evident that nothing escaped his attention: here he noticed an open panel in

a farmer's fence, and there the leaking gutter of a townsman's house; he cast a searching glance at every horse or ox he met, and courteously returned the greeting of young and old. As he was recognized by the anxious men in council, they rose instinctively from their seats on the court-house green, and an expression of welcome relief rose to every face. When one of them said, "Let us consult Mr. Jefferson," he received no reply: he had only uttered what was in every man's heart at the same moment.

So they invited their illustrious neighbor, who had but a short while before exchanged the White House, with all its high honors and severe labors, for the ease and comfort of his own Monticello, to join their council and to aid them by his advice. He dismounted with the alacrity of youth, carefully fastening the reins of his horse to the railing, as he had tied him to the palisades of the President's house in Washington, after riding there on horseback to his inauguration; and unscrewing the top of his cane, he opened its three parts, which formed the legs of a stool, and seated himself on the ingenious contrivance, one of the many results of his own inventive skill. Then courteously acknowledging the honor done him by his friends and neighbors, the ex-President listened attentively to their arguments, now and then throwing in a judicious question so as to elicit the most important facts, and then gave his opinion. Great was the astonishment of the good men of the village when he rejected their modest plans, and spoke of them with a harshness little in keeping with his usual urbanity. But greater still was their surprise when he continued, and now urged them to convert





A GENUINE CROUPIER.

ever heard of a croupier who desired or would accept another position. He won't rise, and he can't fall. Poets are born; croupiers are made.

The infatuation of gambling, as any one must see who stays any time at the German spas, is well-nigh beyond cure when the habit is once fixed. The gamester, after a certain while, is fated. Indissolubly wedded to his idol, like Tannhäuser to Venus, he cleaves to her though a thousand Lisauras slay themselves; and, even after confession and repentance, he is won back to the treacherous goddess, never to leave her until the Day of Judgment.

Over the front of the Conversationshaus and Cursaal seems inscribed the motto of the abbey of Thélème, "Do what you will!" But when you enter, and tarry there, and yield to temptation, your will deserts you, your pride and self-respect. You may behold forms of beauty; you may catch the perfume of the gardens; you may hear the sweetest strains of music; you may have dreams of distant peace and whispering hope; but instead of helping or inspiring, they will only torture you. Beyond and above the beauty and the perfume, the music and the dreams of peace, only one phrase—

"Rien ne va plus,  
Rien ne va plus,  
Rien ne va plus!"—

will echo and re-echo through your mind and heart like a knell, a judgment, and a doom.

### THE MOUNTAINS.—III.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.

THE North Fork of South Branch rises among the highlands of Pendleton County, and flowing northeastward through a narrow valley between the great Alleghany and North Fork mountains, joins the main river five or six miles above Petersburg. The whole course of this stream is a sublime and encouraging example of the truth of that ancient adage, "Patience and perseverance remove mountains." And certainly nowhere east of the Mississippi is the strife of ages between the gigantic stubbornness of rock and the conquering perseverance of water recorded with more curious accuracy, or illustrated with more strange and stupendous pictures.

Our adventurers, retracing their route from the plains to a point one mile above Petersburg, there wheel nearly to the right about, cross the river, and take the old Seneca road up the North Fork.

There is a new graded road leading to the same goal, very good and practicable for carriages, which shuns the stream and clings to the hill-sides. The old road coasts the river with frequent fordings, is very rugged and difficult, but from it the picture-gallery is exhibited to much greater advantage. In-

deed, the river itself is always a pleasing companion, never growing monotonous or wearisome in your thirty miles' ride, with its continual alternations of flashing rapids and transparent emerald pools, wherein shoals of trout may be seen, deep down, gliding amidst the mirrored pictures of graceful overshadowing trees and singular rock pinnacles that adorn the banks. There is no delay in opening the entertainment, and a short distance after striking the old road the eye is arrested by a magnificent geological illustration of the upheaval of stratified rocks. The arch is regularly drawn as a rainbow, of grand proportions, and its square breaks and fresh tints of red and yellow amidst the dark green foliage stare like a garish piece of scene-painting.

Pursuing our route, we ford the river, and anon at the base of a mountain spur, where we might have expected to see a log-cabin with clapboard roof and mud chimney, we are astonished to behold the lofty battlements and castellated towers of a feudal stronghold, gray with antiquity, and deserted except by a company of crows. Were it not that the anomaly of feudal castles in the Alleghanies is somewhat too preposterous,



ARCHED STRATA.

and the disenchanting daylight rather too searching, we might have indulged in our illusion for a reasonable time, so square cut and artificial is the natural masonry, so characteristic the architectural forms.

This romantic pile is designated by the natives as the "Chimney Rocks," which indicates a republican contempt for medieval reminiscences. These, however, are but the preliminary surprises ere we enter the grand portal of this valley of wonders.

A short distance above these towers we enter the "Cloverton," or North Fork Gap, where the young river, here not over forty yards in width, has cut its way through a mountain more than two thousand feet in height. The passage is so narrow, and the opposing precipices crowd so closely on the stream, that it has required a deal of labor and blasting powder to open a convenient roadway. Passing under the shadow of these overhanging cliffs, we presently find ourselves in a vast amphitheatre of rock-faced terraces, rising one above the other, until they culminate in pinnacled summits touching the clouds.

As we proceed, stopping from time to time to look backward and upward, the scene develops in extent and intensifies in interest; but not until we have reached a point two miles above does the eye comprehend its sublime proportions at a single glance.

From here the mountain-sides appear to be built up of massive lines of fortification of the ancient Moorish type.

"The embattled tower, the donjon keep,  
The loop-hole grates where captives weep,  
The flanking walls that round them sweep,"

are all pictured with a grim distinctness and vastness of design which put the works of puny man to shame. It is altogether the most magnificent rock picture I have seen in the Alleghanies, but, like most of them, wants water, the stream at best being too small for such a canvas, and here especially, as if frightened at its own work, it creeps in concealment among the trees and bushes.

Having devoted an hour or more to the studying and enjoying of this picture, our travelers mounted and resumed their road, passing with a cursory glance many a pretty cascade, curious outcropping of rock, and minor bit of landscape, which, elsewhere located, might have been the motive of a day's journey.

Still a few miles beyond, the highway leaves the river, crossing some high plateaus, and becoming comparatively uninteresting until it again rejoins it. During this separation the stream runs through a narrow gulch hemmed in by overhanging precipices, affording no passage for horses, and only practicable to hardy and enterprising footmen during periods of low water. At this season the river was reasonably flush, and our adventurers, rather satiated with rock-work, concluded to leave that chamber of wonders unopened.

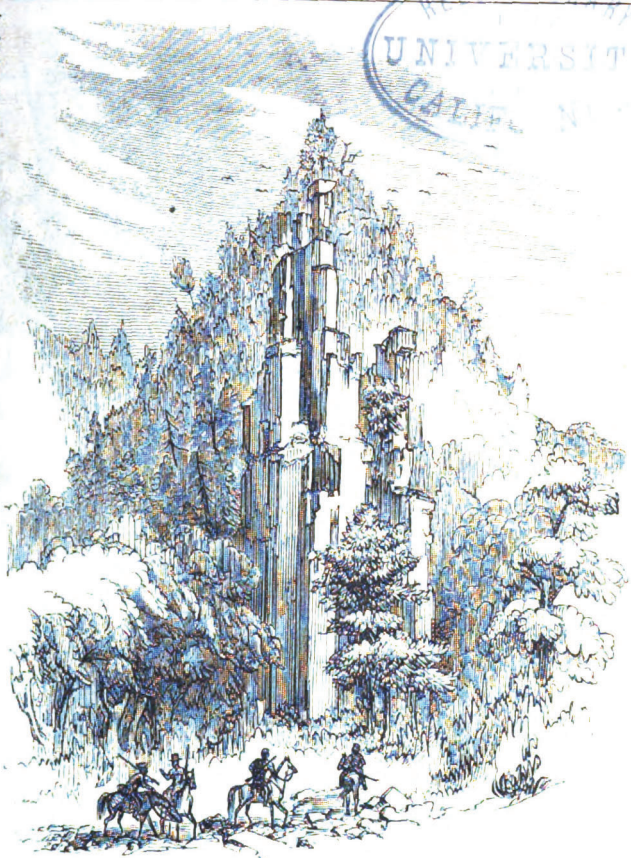
About night-fall we reached Adam Karr's, eighteen miles from Petersburg. Being con-



siderably jaded by the ride, and having been attracted by the sight of some extraordinary pinnacles a mile or two below, we determined to rest here all night, and take time to gratify our curiosity in the fresh morning.

The patriarch of the North Fork received us with a hospitality not perhaps so original and picturesque as that of the man of the mountains, but with equal frankness and cordiality, and in a house whose architecture and appliances indicated its propinquity to a good graded turnpike. He too was surrounded with stalwart sons and buxom daughters, and his household was crowned with a substantial, smiling wife, which gives things an air of comfort not otherwise attainable.

Adam Karr had also seen something of the world. Having driven cattle in his youth, he had recollections and anecdotes of sundry visits to the lowland towns, and perhaps had been even as far as Baltimore. But these were among the vanities of his youth, and had left little or no impress on his manners or character. With a fine, genial, honest nature as a foundation, he had grown up, the human product of his adjacent mountains and meadows. The lord proprietor of some two thousand acres of rocks and forest, lying at all angles between a perpendicular and a plain, he was a mighty hunter of deer, and could tell bear stories to compete with Meshach Browning. Five flint-lock rifles of different calibres and patterns stood behind his chamber door—percussion he despised as an innovation—while skins and antlers adorned his hall in true baronial fashion. The fierce glitter of his eye and iron steadiness of his arm as he handled one of those hunting-pieces, of length and weight to crush a dandy sportsman; his bare, horny feet, impatient of shoes, except on ceremonious occasions; the rude simplicity of his speech, occasionally startling by its directness—all

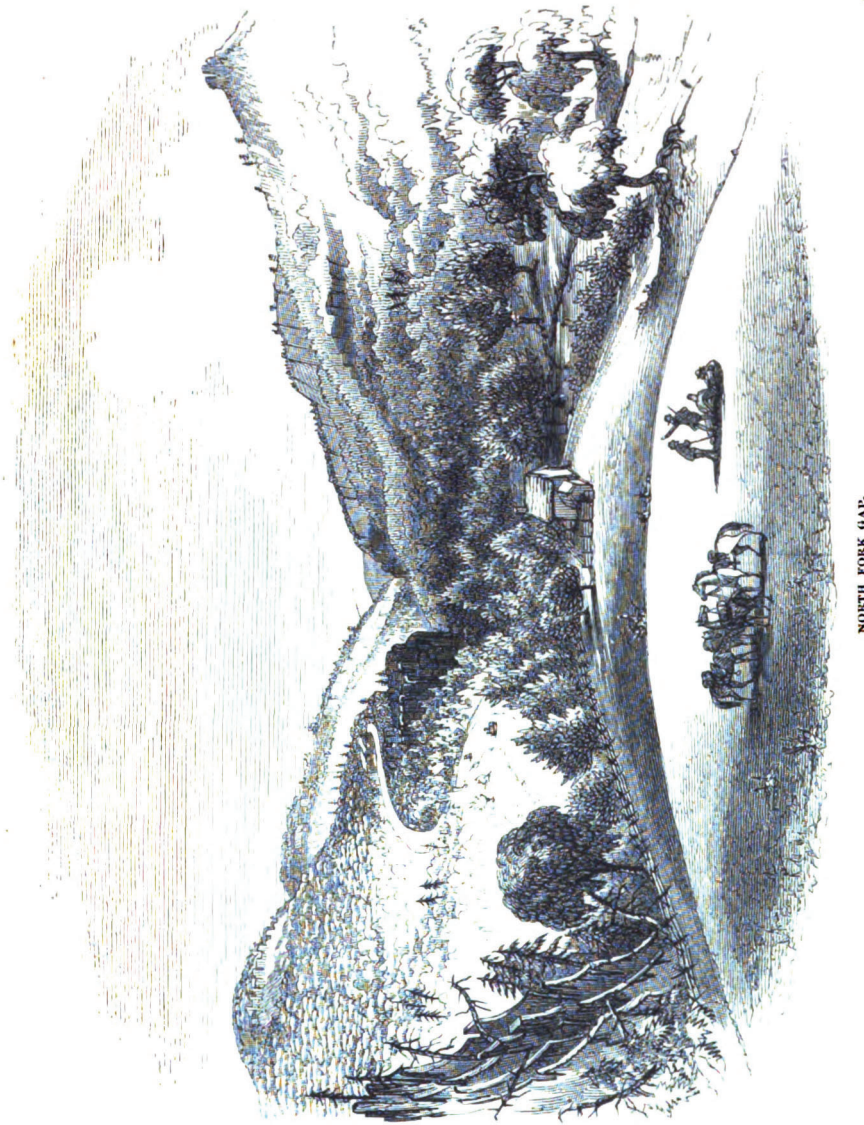


THE CHIMNEY ROCKS.

savored of the mountains, savage and rock-ribbed. But his estate was also enriched with several handsome strips of river-bottom, whose fertility reminded one of the Moorfield country. Hence the comfortable homestead was surrounded with well-bred and well-fed stock, with plenty of corn in the cribs and hay in the barns. And hence, also, there was a certain milkiness, as it were the milk of sweet-corn, flowing from old Adam's heart, which was abundant enough to make one forget the ruggedness, and love the man as he stood.

Once upon a time a youthful minister of the Gospel was sent out to preach in this wilderness. He was fresh from his theological studies and the indulgence of a doting mother. His health was fragile, but his zeal strong; very poor in worldly goods, but rich in faith. The field he was ordered to cultivate was missionary ground, full of difficulties, discouragements, and even dangers, without the romance of foreign travel or the *éclat* of adventures among the heathen—a field where humility and self-sacrifice were demanded without the remotest expectation of honor or profit, except the ennobling honor





NORTH FORK GAP.

of having fulfilled a duty, the inestimable profit of having laid up treasure in heaven.

Resolutely, and with the courage of a martyr, he turned his back upon the libraries and firesides of civilization, and, to fulfill his first engagement, made his way on foot up the savage defile, wading the river where practicable, and begging a lift behind some mounted drover where the water appeared too deep. Arrived, foot-sore and weary, at the log temple, the seat of his ministerial labors, he found an encouraging assembly awaiting his coming. The crowd represented Shakspeare's seven ages of man, from the puling infant in the mother's arms to the oldest inhabitant—of both sexes, but

chiefly women—and some changes in the description of the intermediate characters. Dogs were numerous, and also horses, with several light wagons and a neat four-seated carriage, indicating the presence of some landed aristocrat. All the company were in their best clothes and Sunday-meeting manners, while numbers were suffering under the affliction of shoes in honor of the occasion.

Meekly depositing his flaccid carpet-bag with a brawny, bearded elder, the neophyte stood behind the desk and delivered his well-conned sermon. It was heard with devout and flattering attention, with only the occasional and inevitable interruptions incident to such assemblies: the screaming of an im-





REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED.

placable baby, which obstinately refused to be comforted; the periodical dog-fight, originating in the vacant space in front of the preacher's desk, and smothered out under the benches occupied by the women; a stampede on the male side of the congregation, occasioned by a row among the horses outside, or the report of a critter having broken his bridle.

In spite of these disturbances, the young minister's *début* was highly satisfactory to his audience. What they didn't understand proved his superior scholarship, and what they did was flattering to their own intelligence. The sermon was doubtless good in itself, but "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet;" and the Word, as he delivered it, seemed very sweet and profitable to the starving souls of the North Fork.

After service was ended, and with it the absorbing sense of his spiritual responsibility, the youthful brother's carnal nature reminded him of his long morning's walk and light breakfast, and that he was most atrociously hungry.

With a feeling of satisfaction, which similar experiences only will enable one to appreciate, he accepted the invitation of Adam Karr (the owner of the neat little carriage) to go home with him. The motion of the vehicle was a delicious rest after his walk, while the aspect of the motherly dame beside whom he was cushioned filled his hungry imagination with comforts he had hardly hoped to find in these mountains. He held it no sin, no turning back from the plow or lusting after the flesh-pots, to picture a table filled with rustic delicacies, ham and eggs, a smoking pot-pie, milk and butter in abun-

dance, certainly, perhaps a haunch of venison. Well, here we are arrived. The neat weather-boarded house, painted without, the snug bedded parlor, ceiled and wainscoted with poplar plank, and carpeted with rag carpet, so far above the ordinary style of the country, all tended to assure him that he had not overestimated the character of his hosts nor the quality of the expected meal. Yet mid-day was long past and twilight approaching ere the hoped-for announcement was made. At length it came.

"Young man, step in and take a bite of supper with us. We live middlin' rough and poor up here, but a good Christian oughtn't to mind that."

Introduced to the supper-room, he there beheld an oaken table surrounded by rude stools and benches. On it was neither cloth nor plate, cup, knife, nor fork—neither bread nor meat, butter nor milk. Its nakedness was relieved only by a single large wooden bowl containing a smoking mess of frumenty, or wheat boiled in milk, a bucket of water in which floated a gourd, the outer edge opposite each seat garnished with wooden or pewter spoons. A single tallow dip candle flared and smoked over the melancholy scene.

At a signal from the host the family ranged themselves around the board, and the clerical guest was courteously motioned to a seat beside him. The blessing, pronounced in a tremulous voice, sounded like a prayer for strength to endure rather than enjoy the food provided for them. After the Amen the patriarch took up his wooden spoon, and pitched into the dish before him, curtly informing the stranger that he had better follow his example. Youth and necessity did not wait for a second bidding. He did pitch in, and as the mess had been well salted and buttered, it was not so bad as it looked.

Thus the family circle dipped and ate with a will, and with more merriment than one would think such a feast could provoke. When drink was needed, the dripping gourd was passed from mouth to mouth, and when the bowl of frumenty was nearly emptied, it was again replenished from the pot over the fire, showing that the fare was not limited in quantity at least. Our youth had partaken freely enough to stay his hunger, but had still indulged the hope that this was only a sort of introduction to the meal, and there might be something else coming; but at length there was a general cessation of the spooning, and he was requested to return thanks.

Shocked by the suddenness of the call, he would fain have gone in for a few additional spoonfuls, but it was too late. It was then that a full sense of his position was realized. O nature! if this was the style of living among the magnates, what would it be with the commoners of his congregation? But the youth felt the spirit of the ancient fa-





GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

thers swell within him—that grand and mysterious source of strength which stimulated St. Anthony under the heat and privations of the deserts, which warmed St. Francis in his ice-bound cell in the mountains, which sustained St. Simeon Stylites on his lonely pillar through all the vicissitudes of the seasons. The heavier the cross the greater the glory.

Transcending the curt and formal ceremonial which usually follows the feast of roast beef and plum-pudding, he returned thanks with a fervor and prolixity which bore witness to the triumph of mind over matter, the trampling under foot of carnal weaknesses, the resolution to endure all things. Its earnestness touched even the rugged heart of his entertainer, who, as they left the table, grasped his hand with,

"I'm glad, young man, you enjoyed your supper; it's mighty healthy feed, and won't give ye the dyspepsy."

Having made up his mind to it, our neophyte passed an unusually cheerful evening with the family, slept that night the sweet sleep of the laboring man, and rose to thank

God for a clear head and an appetite sharp enough to accept gratefully whatever food the ravens might bring.

On being ushered in to breakfast, his astonishment was so great as nearly to upset his manners. There was a table spread with a snow-white cloth, and garnished with all the appliances of modern civilization (not, however, including such flummeries as napkins or silver forks). There were dishes of juicy beefsteak, fried chicken, eggs, hot cakes, honey, maple-molasses, and coffee—a board abundant enough to breakfast a whole conference.

He rubbed his eyes and pinched himself several times ere he ventured to ask the blessing, tremulously doubting the while whether he would not presently awake from his dream, to find this mirage of a hungry imagination

resolved into a bare bowl of frumenty. The attentive host piled his plate with ample proofs of its substantiality, while the smiling matron of the coffee-pot refused to let his cup remain empty for a moment. One might have observed among the younger folks a disposition to titter, which was checked by the corrugated brow of the patriarch, beneath which his own eye appeared twinkling humorously.

"I reckon you thought you had a rough supper last night, didn't ye?"

The guest answered meekly and truthfully that it had done him good, and he slept delightfully after it.

"Well, to tell the truth, we mostly live better than that up here, but I thought I'd jist try you onst, to see if you wasn't one of these proud, stuck-up fellers. That kind won't do any good in these mountains. But you took it kindly, and said as long a grace as if you'd had a first-rate supper. You'll do."

And he did do. A day or two after, being called to visit a sick person some miles distant, he prepared to go on foot, when old



Adam forbade it, saying "it didn't look respectable for the preacher to be tramping about the country." At the door stood a horse, saddled and bridled. "That horse is yours," said he; "he never stumbles, and will carry you safe any where a man may want to go."

And so, laboring zealously but meekly, with patience and tact, regardless of self, and mindfully of the work in hand, our mountain missionary continued to grub among the moral rocks and stumps of his rugged field, sowing the good seed intrusted to him by the Master in every available crevice and cranny. Some seeds, indeed, fell by the way-side, some fell in stony places where they had not much earth, and some fell among thorns; but some, he had reason

to believe, took root and bore hopeful fruit. But this was not all his reward. When his two years' mission was ended, he departed not as a stranger, but amidst the tears and regrets of many sincere and warm-hearted friends; not on foot, but pacing pleasantly on old Adam's sure-footed gift; not in seedy broadcloth, thin, patched, and empty, but in a brand-new suit of substantial gray jeans, with a hundred dollars in the pocket; not pale, nervous, and hypochondriac, but with cheeks flushed with health, and the inspiring consciousness of a sacred task faithfully and cheerfully accomplished.

Fortunately our entertainer did not take it into his head to test the quality of our humility, but at once took a fancy to both the major and myself, whose traveling experiences enabled us to avoid his rough angles. On the other hand, he looked askance at Dick, and could scarcely conceal his contempt of Augustus, who had asked diverse inane questions about bears, wolves, wild-cats, and other familiar quadrupeds, whose appearance and habits every child ought to be acquainted with—at least, so Adam thought.

Next morning we mounted and started to look at the rocks, with old Adam himself as



KARE'S PINNACLES.

our guide. Retracing our road for about a mile, we crossed the stream, and following up a rocky ravine washed by an insignificant rivulet, at length stood in front of the Pinnacles. These are two sheets of rock strata, about forty yards apart, rising perpendicularly from the slope of a mountain to the height of two or three hundred feet above the surrounding forest. Seen on end, they resemble obelisks or spires, singularly slender and artificially wrought, the breaks and fissures all square cut like gigantic masonry. From the side view their summits appear cut into the most jagged and bizarre forms, imitating no work of human invention, but rather suggesting the incomprehensible industry of demons—such uncouth, aimless, and mighty masses as are always by the popular imagination attributed to the devil.

A growth of lofty forest trees springs around the base of these rocks, as if to afford the opportunity of estimating their towering height by comparison, while every crevice and jutting angle is wildly adorned with moss, shrubbery, and a stunted growth of pines. The view of the rocks and the gorge which they overlook is romantically beautiful, and, taken from the opposite side of the river, affords a more regular picture, but not



so curious and characteristic as the sketch given.

Returning, we amused ourselves killing snakes, which are plentiful hereabout, and at the river were the accidental witnesses of an interesting event in the lives of the *feræ naturæ* of these regions.

At some distance off, perched upon a dead tree which commanded a view of the proprietor's meadows and stack-yards, we observed a bald eagle sitting like a statue of Liberty, his golden head shining in the sun. It was proposed that Adam should try the range of his long rifle upon him, which he prepared to do; but "ere a bead was drawn" the eagle swept from his perch and sailed grandly over the meadows, and then poisoning himself, made a swoop at something near the stack-yard.

"There goes a good hen, the thievin' devil!" exclaimed Karr, spitefully, letting fly a wild shot at the rising robber.

The eagle evidently had something in his claws as he rose; and, strangely enough, after the shot, instead of sailing off to some comfortable mountain-top to enjoy his dinner, he continued to rise perpendicularly, wheeling in rapid circles upward and upward until he was lost to view.

Old Adam chuckled as he observed, "I think that chance shot spiled his fun for him, I do." And so we all strained our eyes into the blue firmament, endeavoring to see the eagle, instinctively the while riding toward the stack-yard. But it is useless; he's gone; and the shot only crippled or frightened him. Then we were astonished at hearing a rushing sound through the air, which rapidly neared us, and the eagle came down like a falling star, striking the earth a hundred yards ahead, and about the same distance from the spot where he struck his quarry.

We dismounted and rushed forward to verify the marvelous shot, but found another explanation still more curious. The eagle was stone-dead, without the mark of a bullet about him; but under his thigh was a hole eaten in to his very heart. A few yards off a weasel, torn and bloody but still alive, trailed its way through the grass with a broken back.

"A quarrel among thieves," said old Karr, "and the chickens will git their due now."

But some of us, not so materialistic in our views, pitied the weasel, and regretted that, after his sublime ascent and heroic defense of his life, he had not escaped safe and sound.

The major rather took part with the eagle, disgusted that so grand a warrior should have fallen by so contemptible an enemy. As for the weasel, what better time for it to die than after a victorious contest with the king of the air? So thought old Karr as he set his heel on the varmint's head and put it out of its misery.

Crossing the river homeward, the style and

keeping of our host's riding-mare attracted observation. She had evidently better blood in her veins than is common among the mountain hacks, and the owner was proud of her. The major admired her points, and thought she could run.

"So she kin," replied Adam, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, as if there was some facetious mystery connected with the subject.

"Was her speed ever tested?"

"Yes, it was, to my sorrow," replied Adam, still looking funny and demure.

"Did you lose much on her?" cried Dick, earnestly.

"I never bet nothin'," said Karr; "and she won her race too, but it was a mighty bad win for me. She didn't run too slow; the trouble was, she run too fast."

There was a long level stretch of road in advance, and the major, who had an idea of purchasing, intimated that he would like to try a brush with her. Dick, also, feeling his horse-jockey blood stirred, offered to bet a thousand dollars he could beat her for any named distance.

"You're mighty free with your money, young man, and I'm glad you've got it to bet; but, as I was a-saying, I run no more races. It was on this very ground she won her last match, and I swore then she should never run agin as long as she was my mare."

Perceiving that the old man rather desired to be pressed on the subject, the major solicited him to give us an account of the race alluded to.

"Well," replied Adam, assuming the air of a story-teller, "it happened jist as I'm a-goin' to tell ye. About two years ago I had been out to salt some cattle, and was comin' home this way, when I meets Jim Pogue ridin' of a young horse he was mighty conceity about; and so, the first thing, he banter me for a race, offerin' to bet me a thousand dollars" (here a glance at Dick), "although I don't believe he could have raised fifty to his name without a-sellin' the critter he was a-straddle of. Howsomever, I made no account of his braggin' and bettin', but, having a mind to try the mare a little stretch, I took up his banter, though I had my rifle along jist as I have now, and had the advantage of him of fifty pounds in weight (he being a slip of a feller like Mr. Rattlebrain there), which fifty pounds advantage is a disadvantage in horse-racin', and not to mention the inconvenience of the gun and pouch. But I took no account of these things, and off we started. Now Pogue's colt, bein' young and brash, got about two jumps ahead in the start, and I holdin' the mare in to keep her level; but she was too ambitious, and we was soon neck and neck, and I was about passin' him, when we struck the spring branch where it crosses the road, and lit right in the middle of my wife's flock o' geese. Among us we





THE RACE.

killed two or three of 'em, and sich a squawkin' and flappin' they set up as was enough to scare a man, let alone a horse. I reckon my mare must have jumped the length of two fence-rails; and as for Jim Pogue, I see him travelin' by himself in the air and over into the field, where he lit in a pile of brush. The colt kept on follerin' my mare, and bein' light, pushed her close, but couldn't catch her even with that.

"Not knowin' jist then where Pogue lit, I tried to hold in; but the mare's ambition was up, and the colt follerin', and I inconvenienced with the rifle, and afore I knowed it we turned the p'int fornense the barn, and there the women was in the road milkin' the cows. Through went the mare, upsettin' women, cows, and milk-pails, all in a heap. I pulled till my shoulders ached, but she had the bit in her teeth, and it was no use. Then, as luck would have it, I had a Berkshire sow I give fifty dollars for down in Moorfield the year before, and jist ahead she was layin' in the road sucklin' her pigs—thirteen pigs, and nary a runt among 'em. Well, the devilish mare lit right on top of 'em with her forefeet, and killed and crippled about half the litter.

"Now by this time I was gittin' pretty nigh desput, for, thinks I, she's killed my wife and half the stock on the place, and she'll keep on over the high bank above the house, jump into the river, and break her neck and mine both. So I laid my rifle crossways, and with both hands pulled on

her right rein, so as to draw her head in toward the gate, thinkin' she might stop there, as she was used to do. But, you see, she had sich headway she couldn't stop short, but she turned, busted clean through the gate, and fell back on her hams. As she did so, I went one way and the rifle another. The gun struck a rock as she fell, broke the stock short off behind the lock, and the jar set her off, and killed my wife's big red chicken-cock. I lit head-foremost on the log step there by the porch, and certainly would have mashed my skull, but my bear-dog, old Howler, happened to be layin' there asleep in the sun, and, for one piece of good luck, I hit him plump, and broke three of his ribs; so he hasn't been good for nothin' since, but saved my skull, which I reckon was of equal value."

Old Adam's story, as it proceeded, was accompanied with hurrahs and hilarity which made the mountain echoes shout and storm with reiterated applause. The narrator, although maintaining a lugubrious gravity throughout, was evidently as much tickled as any of his hearers.

"And what became of Pogue?"

"Oh! well, you see, while I was a-washin' the blood off my head, I see Pogue go by afoot and limpin'. 'Pogue,' says I, 'come in, rest and refresh, and pay me that thousand dollars.' But the feller walked on, and never looked up."

"And what did the old woman say?" asked Augustus.





CLIFFS OF SENECA.

"Young man," said Adam, with a queer twist of his mouth, "git married yourself, and you'll not have occasion to ask so many foolish questions."

Being satisfied that the proprietor was not approachable on the subject of selling his racer, the party, on their return, bundled up their traps and prepared to pursue their journey. Karr expressed great pleasure at their visit, and urged them to return in October, promising, as an inducement, a grand deer-hunt. "I don't keep a pack of hounds," said he, "like they do down on the branch; dogs can't run among these rocks, and jist scares the game with their noise; but I'll

jist put my four boys in the mountains, and if there's a deer or a bear in there, they'll wake him up, I reckon, and they kin outrun any pack of hounds in Hardy."

After a ride of five miles our travelers reached the mouth of Seneca Creek, a tributary of the North Fork. Here, on some open ground immediately at the junction of the streams, they involuntarily halted, to gaze at the stupendous cliff which rises on the opposite side of the river.

This cliff exhibits the same geological structure and the same peculiar character of those noted from time to time since we left Moorfield. Indeed, from the eastern



border of Hampshire to the Alleghany Ridge, running transversely, and entirely independent of the usual horizontal and inclined strata of the mountains, this line of perpendicular upheaval may be continuously traced, sometimes along the hill-sides, appearing in long lines not higher than an ordinary stone fence, then in every cross valley and ravine cropping out in art-like mimicry of chimneys, castles, campaniles, and cathedrals. These exhibitions continue for many miles above the point we had reached, but the cliffs at Seneca are reputed the loftiest and grandest specimen of this peculiar rock-work to be found in the valley.

The junction of the North Fork Turnpike and the Pack-horse Road, across the Alleghanies from Beverly, has grown up a little settlement at this place, consisting of half a dozen families, with the conveniences of a store, a post-office, a blacksmith's shop, a school-house, and, I believe, a meeting-house and apple-jack distillery. There was no tavern or regular place of entertainment; but to atone for this deficiency, any of the householders were ready to take in travelers as a special favor.

Having been recommended to Adamson, the proprietor of the mercantile establishment located about a mile up the creek, we presented ourselves, and were hospitably received. Here we dined, and spent the afternoon lounging about the store, and hooking a mess of trout from the Seneca, determined to devote a fresh day to viewing the cliffs.

Adamson is an exotic, a Scotch-Irishman, who has the reputation of being a shrewd, intelligent trader and a worthy and upright citizen. He has set up shop at this outpost to barter the knickknacks of civilization for the products of the mountains, and to furnish clothes to one class of the natives in exchange for the coats which they violently strip from another class.

The place retains many of the characteristics of those ancient frontier trading posts which we read of in the days when the United States had frontiers, and they skinned aboriginals as well as bears.

All sorts of queer people congregate here, bringing in peltries, ginseng, venison hams, yarn stockings, maple-sugar, home-made cloth, oats, corn, potatoes, butter, and eggs, to exchange for gay-colored dry-goods, crockery, tin and hardware, gunpowder, tobacco, infinitesimal packages of coffee, and corpulent jugs of whisky. Some come on foot, others in sleds, most on horseback, and very few in wheeled vehicles, the country generally not being addicted to this mode of transportation.

Adamson's fancy salesman is the model of a mountain beau, in his own conceit at least. Going to the desk to jot down some notes of our journey, I took up a scrap of paper with the following inscription, legible



THE CLERK.

amidst a maze of inky smirks and flourishes: "Sylvester Rains is my name, and happy is the gal that gits me for a man."

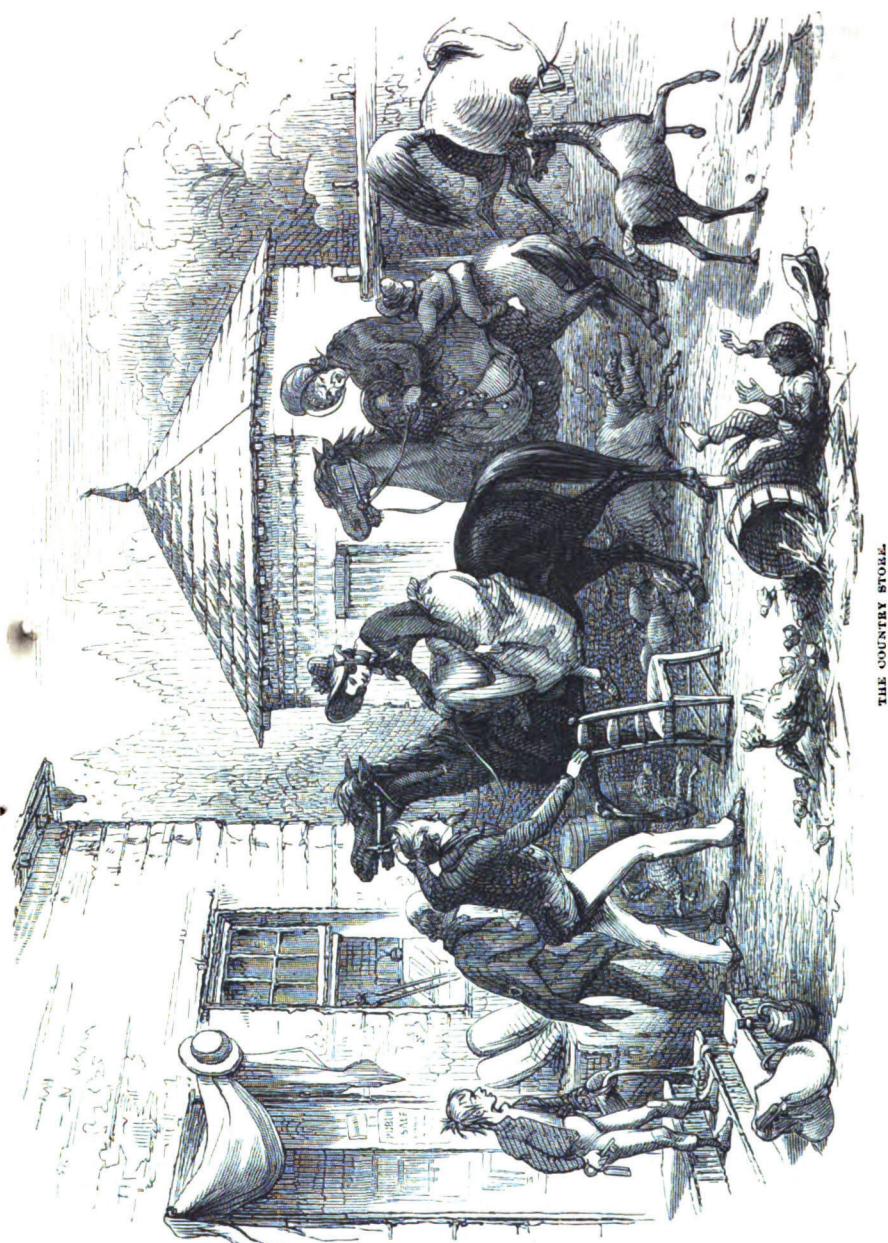
Thrice happy Sylvester, may your delusions be perennial! They will help to keep you amiable and obliging, and enable the mountain belles to make better bargains in calicoes and ribbons.

After this accidental insight I observed Sylvester more closely, and remarked that when a wrinkled dame, overladen with butter and eggs, or a sallow matron, encumbered with babies, rode up, she was allowed to dismount as best she could, and might tumble off if she could do no better; but when a frisky lass, all bouncing and blooming, appeared coming up the lane, down went yard-stick, pen, or molasses-jug, and out rushed the gallant clerk, all smiles and *empressement*.

Although neither Mahala Armantrout, nor Susie Mullinx, nor Peg Teters wore any of those absurd incumbrances called riding-skirts, and either of them could have jumped from the saddle (or meal-bag) to the ground without discommoding a flounce, and, after landing, have shouldered Sylvester and carried him into the store, nevertheless he must drop every thing, run out with a chair, and hold the critter, carry the basket in, and then, giving his roach and shirt collar each a sly twig as he passed the fly-specked looking-glass, take his stand behind the counter with, "Well, Miss Susan, what can I have the pleasure of showing you to-day?"

Meanwhile Dame Wrinkle, with her bundle, stands waiting and grumbling. "Take a seat on that tobacco-box; I'll attend to you presently, mum."

"Looke here, man; I can't stop here all day a-foolin', I can't, eh. I'm in a desput hurry, I am, eh."



THE COUNTRY STORE.

But here comes Mr. Adamson himself, and the impatient granny prefers to deal with him in person rather than wait for that fool-feller that hain't got no manners for old folks, but only for his likes. So she trucks off to the best advantage the contents of her basket, and gets her measure of calico for her daughter's dress, two hats for her grandsons, a quarter of a pound of coffee, not forgetting the complimentary paper of snuff—the in-

variable conclusion of all trades and purchases in these stores.

Meanwhile Sylvester has denuded the shelves of gay prints, and the drawers of ribbon-boxes. He and his fair customer, mutually inclining over the barrier of dry-goods, continue to discuss business in a more quiet and rather indirect manner.

"I say, Miss Susan, how's folks over on Dry Fork about these times?"



"Well, all about our settlement is middlin' hearty, they are."

"Have you been a-having any fun over there lately?"

"Ya-as, indeed; we had a turrible good time at Zed Kyle's last week, we had, eh. You see, Zed had a wool-pickin', he had, and all the gals and fellers was there, they was; and Dilly Wyatt played the fiddle, and we danced the *hølen jøren* night, we did."

Sylvester looked radiant at the thought, and then, with a sly leer, asked, in a lowered tone, "Was Jess there?"

Susan's face seemed to have caught the reflection from the box of pink ribbons which she was examining with sudden interest. "Pshaw, Mr. Rains, what account is it to me ef Jess was there? He mostly bunts with them Kyles and Armantrouts, he does, and I shouldn't wonder ef he mought have been there."

"And he seen you home after the dance, now, didn't he?" whispered the clerk, with a smart diplomatic wink.

"He done no sich a thing," replied Susan, sharply; "'cause he only come as fur as the fork with me, and Martha White, and Mahala Armantrout, and Dilly Wyatt, and Emily Bonner."

"And I'll bet a new dress he carried you across."

"And I'll take the dress jist now off this red and yaller piece, I will; for we all waded across, we did, eh, so we did."

At this stage of the chaffering the proprietor stepped up.

"Mr. Rains, old Sam Bonner, from over the mountain, has just brought in a lot of bear-skins. Go out and receive them.—Miss Susan, I cap wait on you. Have you selected a dress?"

Getting tired of the store, later in the afternoon we all strolled up the Seneca, and finding an inviting pool, we tempered the warmth of the weather by a delicious bath.

Next morning, while the air was still fresh, we rode down to see the cliff. Viewed from the spot where we stood the day before, it was still a most grand and imposing object, but entirely changed in its aspect. Then the sun shone on its face, and its strange outline was drawn white against a dark background of blue clouds and mountains. To-day the sun was behind it, and it loomed up black and grim against the clear blue sky.

It would puzzle an artist to decide between the attractions of its gay and solemn moods. Having satisfied our curiosity here, we crossed the river by an exceedingly rough and difficult ford, and then dismounting, made our way on foot up a stony path which leads to the base of the cliffs, and through the grand breach or gateway wrought by a slender rivulet trickling from the hills beyond. A nearer approach adds greatly to the apparent height and sublimity of the scene, and



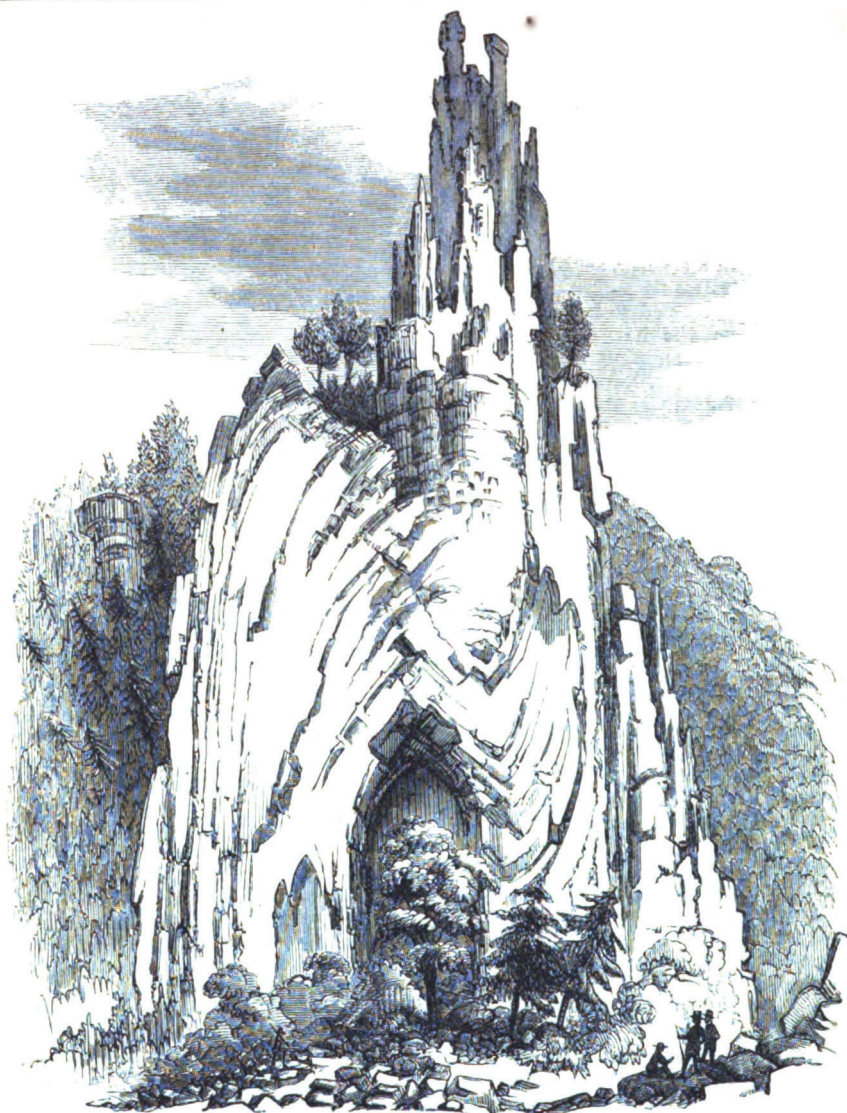
OLD SAM BONNER.

as we advance, its faces change into new and wonderful shapes at every step. About half through the passage-way we turned from the road, and clambering up the abutment opposite the principal cliff, its gable end was presented to us in the similitude of a vast cathedral—a perfect architectural study, from foundation to summit, including even the details of the medieval Gothic.

I have never seen any purely natural object so nearly resemble the work of man as does this majestic fossil eruption. It has about the height and frontage of the Duomo of Strasburg, showing the lofty spire rising from a group of turrets and pinnacles, the unfinished (or begging) tower, the grand portal, a hundred feet in height, with some marvelous tracery and shadowings of Gothic windows above and beside it—in brief, all the parts and proportions of an ancient masterpiece of architectural art.

Yet, with all this closeness of resemblance, the impression made on the mind is totally dissimilar. In viewing the true cathedral we are filled with artistic admiration at the boldness of design and the beauty of details, the aggregation of costliness and labor. Yet its grandeur is beneficent, and therein is a sense of protection; its rich and varied traceries, labors of love—the sacred gifts of patience and thought to religion; the giddy height of its spires and flowering finials leads our eyes heavenward.

Coming suddenly upon the strange pile at Seneca, the first impression is of astonishment mingled with incredulity; then, as the fact is forced upon our staring senses, we are thrilled with a sentiment of vague terror. This is not a temple erected by the hands of holy and God-fearing men, but a vast caricature heaved up in this lonely wilderness by the uncouth strength of some gigantic power unknown to man. It is not a living, but a dead temple; not a ruin, as of a body



CATHEDRAL ROCK, MOUTH OF SENECA.

fallen into decay, but a weird, uncouth image, an awful, stony shadow of something that never lived, a monstrous birth of chance and chaos.

We gazed at it for hours, studying the changes in its contours effected by change of position, watching the developments in its grim countenance under the varying lights and shadows. We found it impossible by means of a sketch to convey the wild and frightful impression of the reality.

Architect—you who have the privilege and responsibility of piling up our superfluous American millions in stone and mortar—a summer's study on the North Fork may freshen your fancy, and acquaint you some-

what with the works of the oldest master in your art. Artist, a tour through this wild valley will fill your portfolio with studies worth a tour round the world. Geologist—rejoicing in the abrasions, upheavals, and contortions, the earthquake agonies of Mother Earth—up the North Fork you will find things ripped up to your satisfaction, and perhaps you may find a brass mine. Peddlers of quack medicines and bill-posters, don't go up there: the inhabitants are hopelessly healthy, and the rocks infested with rattlesnakes. For my part, I have got rid of the dyspepsia, and had my fun out of it; and to-morrow, God willing, we start for the trans-Alleghany streams.



## THE MOUNTAINS.—IV.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



A COVEY.

TURNING our backs on the valley of the North Fork, and simultaneously on the rising sun and the last glimmerings of material civilization, we thread our way up the narrowing gorge of Seneca Creek, tunneling apparently into the very bowels of the great Alleghany Ridge. The road is straight and stony, overarched by the primeval forest, indented with the hoof-marks of horses and cattle, but without traces of wheels. The habitations of mud and sticks dotted sparsely along the route make our recent rude experiences seem luxurious by comparison.

Wild groups collect in the cabin doors, staring strangely at our cavalcade. People don't know where any body lives, nor how many miles it is to any where. Women slam the doors in our faces, wolfish dogs howl at us, and elfish children flee at our approach, like young pheasants artlessly hiding in thickets, where their tow heads and peering eyes must inevitably betray them to the hunter—supposing any one ever hunted for such game.

Dick, dismounting suddenly, by a cruel ruse surprised a covey in a laurel break, and with some difficulty succeeded in capturing a specimen. The little one uttered a cry of despair; so, to make amends, he gave it a handful of nickel cents. Instinctively clutching the coin—a certain proof of its humanity—the young creature fled out of sight like a liberated hare.

Following this road along the stream for ten or twelve miles, we at length come

plump against the mountain, where Seneca appears to issue from a rock-bound gulch, no longer affording room for a roadway. Here human science steps in to relieve our embarrassment, and we turn aside to ascend the ridge by a narrow but well-graded road. The summit is soon reached, as the altitude of the crossing is not so great as usual, and we have been gradually ascending ever since we left Adamson's.

From the stifling heat, damp shadows, and limited horizons of the lower road to the sunlight and breezy coolness of the mountain-tops the change was delightful. At this point Alleghany shows none of the rugged and savage features presented at other crossings. The ascent is comparatively easy, and the broad, rolling summit open and mild in its

aspect, being dotted with cultivated fields and green pastures, with more thrifty-looking settlements than are to be seen in the Seneca Valley.

These uplands are also gay with flowers, pre-eminent among which blazed a scarlet lily, drooping bell-shaped from its tall and graceful stalk. Gorgeous azaleas border the path, bushes fifteen feet in height, covered with pink, red, and orange-colored flowers. On the western slope we descend through forests of lofty firs, with a dense undergrowth of kalmias and the metallic-leaved rhododendron, with its superb clusters of pure white and delicate pink blossoms.

Anon we strike a stream of clear amber-tinted water running through green meadows and a valley of considerable width. This is Gandy, the first trans-Alleghany stream we meet, and one of the feeders of Cheat River.

"Now, boys, for the trout!"

It was a little after mid-day when this inspiring cry was raised, and on the spot we threw ourselves from the horses and commenced unpacking our fishing tackle. The ground was most inviting for the sport. After a long course of sparkling rapids the stream found temporary repose in a deep pool, a hundred yards or more in length. One bank was shaded by a cliff, the other smooth and gently sloping, carpeted to the water's edge with fresh green turf. There was neither bush, nor briar, nor sunken drift-logs to tangle lines or vex the angler, but an

umbrageous tree hanging over here and there to give the needful shade. Such a spot as might be found in a gentleman's pleasure-grounds.

The major's May-fly was the first that touched the mirror-like surface of the water, and on the moment there was a flash and a struggle which ruffled the pool from bank to bank, and caused the rest of us to suspend our own preparations in anxiety to witness the result. After a few moments' tantalizing play with the reel and bending of the delicately balanced rod, the skillful angler landed a two-pound trout, a lovely specimen for plumpness and beauty. As the fish leaped upon the grass, with his glowing salmon-tinted breast, his mottled olive-green body with double rows of gold and vermilion spots, and crimson-tipped fins, he was indeed a study for an artist.

"By the respectable shade of Izaak Walton, or the gentler memory of Dame Juliana Berners!"—as the major spoke his fine face was suffused with mingled pleasure and regret—"Larry," he half whispered, "what a mistake not to have brought the ladies! Just fancy a light covered wagon, a tent on this level green, and such sport as this!"

"Thunder, what a fish!" shouted Dick, sticking his fingers into the trout's gills and enthusiastically thrusting it into my face. "I'll bet a thousand dollars it weighs five pounds."

"Not quite, Richard," quoth the major, coolly landing another scarcely inferior to the first; "but if you will keep reasonably quiet for half an hour or so, I'll guarantee to show you trout a number of which will weigh twenty pounds."

"Twenty pounds!" exclaimed Dick, in amazement; but then, rubbing his head, "I think there must be some catch in that."

"Of course there is; consequently, beware of the hook;" and the major lifted out his third trout, which he swung over to Dick, who unhooked it and threw it on the grass, still pondering on the subject of weights.

Stimulated by this rapid success, the spectators returned to their rods and lines, and were soon all engaged. Dick talked and vociferated, slashed his rod in the water, hooked a "thunderer" and let him get away, tangled his line, and after each misadventure changed his fly and cursed his luck. At length he hooked a fellow firmly, and while playing him backward and forward with great noise, calling the attention of the whole party to the "snorter" he had caught, he landed a fish about eight inches in length; and then, joining in the laugh which followed, he pettishly threw down his implements, and declared he'd rather assist the major than fish himself.

Now, for a young gentleman who had been

telling big fish-stories all the way, and affecting to patronize Cockney's acknowledged greenness, this was rather a lame conclusion; but, as I suspected, Dick had hooked his first trout to-day.

Augustus took to it more gently and seriously, keeping close under the major's shadow, asking advice at every move, and tangling his line with the master's continually. The veteran good-humoredly neglected his own game to direct the throws of the neophyte, until he had seen him successfully land several medium specimens. Then, becoming tired of his attendants, he addressed them persuasively:

"Boys, you don't seem to be doing much fishing, and can't assist me advantageously. Suppose you go up to that bend near where the horses are tied and kindle a fire. I will join you there presently, and show you how to cook a dinner that will be worth your attention."

Pleased with the idea of cooking their own meal, the youngsters went to the spot indicated, and soon raised a fire whose smoke curled above the tree-tops.

For my own part, I had never cared so much for the mere sport of hunting and fishing as I did for the fresh healthfulness and poetry of the sylvan life incident to their pursuit; consequently I paid little attention to the scientific modes and appliances for taking game, but took it *au naturel*, just as I had learned from the mountaineers when a boy.

I found no difficulty in collecting a handful of red worms and a dozen or twenty mussels from the shallows in the stream; with this bait I took my seat luxuriously in an arm-chair formed by the roots of a sycamore, and cushioned with moss. Here I enjoyed an hour's quiet sport after my own fashion, occasionally losing a bait or missing a good fish, by allowing my thoughts to become entangled in pleasant day-dreams. As might be imagined, these took color from my friend's half-whispered suggestion of the gentle prioress and the Book of Saint Alban's; and from 1486, gliding rapidly and naturally down the trouting stream of time to the present hour, as

On an afternoon in blooming June  
I sit by Gandy's amber water,  
Mid vernal bowers and scented flowers,  
And trout in plenty to be caught there.

In fancy seen upon the green  
The milk-white Lodge we long may O! for  
Amid the wilderness's sheen.  
(What does my foolish heart thump so for?)

Tug—tug—too late; he's got my bait  
While I have been so vainly dreaming.  
Keep wide awake he must who'd take  
These troutlings shy, all golden gleaming.

Like sounds from home, from linen dome,  
As sure as I'm a hungry sinner,  
Sweet ministering spirits come,  
And now are frying fish for dinner.



Another bite—oh, what a spite!  
My silken line snaps like a cracker;  
Evanished quite is each fair sprite—  
That last one must have been a "whacker."

Thus am I teased, by visions pleased,  
Commingle sport with idle wishing;  
Time moves as if his wheels were greased,  
While I half dreaming sit, half fishing.

Though moments losing, 'tis yet amusing,  
In a lazy, hazy summer dream,  
While troutlets nibble, rhymes to scribble,  
Whispering a name to the fairy stream.

In spite of my nonsense, I had caught thirty or forty handsome trout, when, seeing the major put up his rod, I lifted my catch and joined the party at the fire, where I was complimented on my luck. The major had taken the heaviest fish, but I had brought in the greatest number; so honors were easy, and we all set about preparing dinner.

A coffee-pot and frying-pan in common, a tin cup and plate for each individual, constituted our mess furniture. Then for stock provisions we had a bacon side, cheese, biscuits, ground coffee, with the usual condiments—sugar, salt, and pepper.

These were all displayed on convenient stones and logs, ready for use. I was detailed to make the coffee, while the major superintended the preparation of the fish. "Your true sportsman," said he, "always speaks of having killed so many fish. A fish loses flavor in the process of dying; if, therefore, you have no facilities for keeping it alive, it should be killed as soon as caught, and never be permitted to die." Having delivered himself to this effect, he selected two dozen of the finest trout, had them nicely dressed, and then commanded a number of flat-topped stones to be brought and heated in the fire. "When they are quite hot," said he, "we will frizzle a slice of fat bacon on each, and then lay the fish in the gravy, where they will cook in a few minutes with a flavor surpassing that of the famous planked shad of the Lower Potomac."

The major discoursed with the assurance of an expert, and sliced his middling with a certain affectation of nicety which impressed his assistants with ideas of his profound science. Laying a cut on one of the heating stones, he exclaimed, "It is just in trim. Now, boys, bring on your trout!"

The scullions hastened to obey the order, each bearing a tin platter with a dozen selected fish. The chief picked them off with a forked stick, and daintily ranged them side by side in the bubbling fat.

A tall mountaineer, on an absurd little horse, who had stopped in the road to look at us, now approached with gaping countenance and outstretched neck, as if deeply interested in the proceedings.

"My friend, won't you 'light and take dinner with us?"

"No," said the fellow, bluntly; "I don't want none of your victuals; but I'm cur'us to see ye cook them fish."

"Just wait a moment, then," said the culinary director, with a complacent wink, "and you'll see something that will surprise you."

At the word there was an explosion like

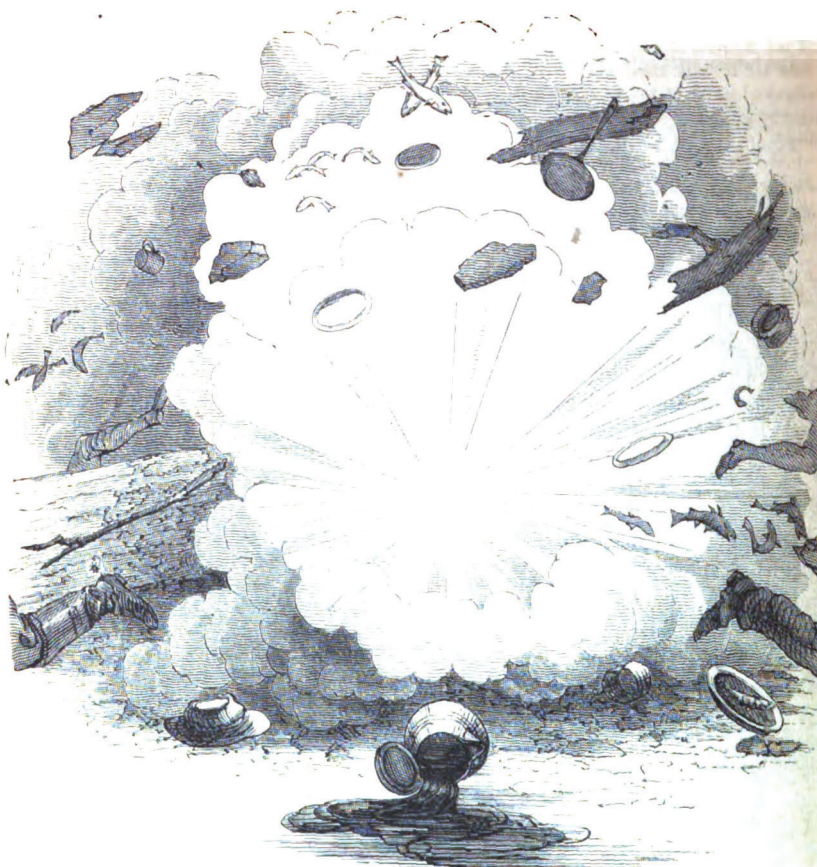


CURIOSITY.

that of a ten-pounder shell, a fragment of a cooking stone whizzed by the spectator's head, and a hot trout slapped him in the face. "Heavens!" he shouted; "I've seen enough!" and putting whip to his horse, he started up the road at full speed. Then in quick succession there followed a whole battery of explosions, sending stones, fish, fire-brands and tin-ware in every direction, some cutting through the branches of the adjacent trees, others sizzling into the stream; the horses broke loose and scampered; the cook and attendants dodged behind trees, or scampered after the horses.

I deftly dropped behind a sycamore log, creeping under the opposite side, where I remained during the bombardment. I had been watching the coffee, and after the firing ceased, ventured to raise my head above the log parapet to look after my charge. Its place was vacant, but I saw the pot lying overturned, near the margin of the stream, some twenty yards off.

"Hello, Laureate! Are you all safe, and do you think it's over?"



A RECIPE FOR COOKING TROUT.—(PATENTED.)

I saw the major peeping from behind a large maple, with a queer expression, as if he was undetermined whether to laugh or swear.

As the fire was pretty well scattered, and not a trace of our cooking visible, I thought we might leave cover, and so we did.

Fortunately, in their flight, Dick and Augustus had followed the same route taken by the horses, and presently came back leading the astonished runaways by their broken bridles.

With some latent trepidation and frequent suspicious glances at the shattered stones, we commenced rebuilding the fire and collecting our scattered utensils. Searching land and water and the branches of trees, we at length recovered most of the tin-ware, sadly dented and battered, but still available for all purposes. The actual losses consisted in some slices of bacon, two dozen trout, and a boiling of coffee. Then we had spread out our quilts and blankets to air, and these were burned in holes by the flying brands, but they would still keep us warm, and appear-

ances were not of much consequence in our housekeeping.

Nevertheless it behooved the major to explain the result of his cooking arrangements, which he did in this wise: For the sake of shape and cleanliness the stones had been selected from the bed of the stream; they contained cells filled with water, which, as they became heated, generated steam, and blew every thing to flinders.

"How did the water get in there?" inquired Richard.

The major replied, with less assurance than usual, "Well, perhaps the cells contained air, which is equally explosive under a high heat."

"It's very clear," said Dick, "there was a pretty big sell somewhere; maybe it was in the stones."

"Capital! capital!" cried the major, giving Dick a look which assured me he would take a cruel revenge on the first opportunity. Even Augustus plucked up. "I've seen flying-fish in Barnum's Museum, but scarcely expected to see fish flying in the mountains."

"Pepper away, pepper away, young gen-



tlemen, but mind your work and don't let the dinner lag. Without accidents, you will still find the receipt a good one."

Said I, "It will appear in the cookery books as a 'saute' of trout, with capers, furnished by an officer of the United States artillery."

"Bravo, Laureate! excellent! Now," said the annoyed chief, handing me a hot fish on a biscuit, "put that under your ribs, and then comment on my receipt."

The split stones had been again heated, and cooked our trout very quietly. Their flavor fully justified the major's boasts, and we made a delightful meal, all the merrier by cause of the preliminary misadventure.

Expanded by a dozen or more of his brownest specimens, a stiff toddy, and an excellent cup of coffee, the culinary chief answered all our rallying very good-humoredly, and even kept his temper when the Dry Forker stopped to gibe at us on his return.

"I say, men, is them fish done yit?"

Dick asked how he liked the specimen he got.

"It was somethin' hotter than I ginerally take 'em," said he, facetiously; "and then, instead of bread ye gim me a stone, which is agin Scripter, hain't it?"

"Oh, you didn't quote Scripture as you rode off a while ago," rejoined Dick. "But get down, and we'll give you the receipt for cooking the fish, which you can teach to your wife."

"Excuse me, mister; my wife don't want none of your receipts for blowin' up things; she's got a way of her own which is more convenient."

"Come, neighbor, 'light and be sociable," said the major, holding up his flask in an insinuating manner.

"Now that's the kind of talk I understand," said the native, dismounting and joining our party. "Gentlemen, here's luck!" And when the drink was swallowed he seated himself on the log and laughed long and loud. "Well, for all the world, I'd like to know what was in them devilish stones!"

The major explained every thing to his satisfaction, in return for which he told us his name was Roy. He lived at the mouth of Red Creek, twenty miles below, and if we would stop at his house he would show us trout-fishing that beat Gandy all hollow. We engaged to visit him; and said he, as he took leave, "I'll show ye how to cook 'em without blowin' your brains out."

Dinner over, we took a siesta on the grass, and later in the afternoon resumed our fishing. At this hour we got our finest fish in the rapids, where those who used artificial flies had all the advantage. The sport was altogether brisk and exhilarating, without quats, entanglements, or any of the other annoyances which often attend trouting in

the mountains. When we had taken enough for supper, making a heavy allowance per head, and doubling that in view of possible accidents, it was determined to knock off for the evening. Our packing was hastened by the appearance of a black cloud and some premonitory growlings of thunder. Mounting as speedily as possible, we took the road to Armantrout's, about a mile distant, at the junction of Gandy with the Dry Fork. As the big drops began pattering through the leaves we increased our speed, but ere we reached the cabin the storm burst in all its fury. The water appeared to fall in sheets, and in five minutes we were drenched to the skin.

Arrived at the house, we did not wait on ceremony, but dismounted and unsaddled in hot haste. The proprietor presently joined us, and hospitably assisted in getting our traps under cover. He then kindled a blaze in the ample chimney, and set a basket of apples before us. We spent the rest of the afternoon steaming before the fire and eating apples, while the horses enjoyed their freedom and the rich browsing in the meadows quite regardless of the rain.

Armantrout was evidently a man of substance, and above the average of his neighborhood in intelligence; yet, contrary to the custom of the country, he had eschewed matrimony, devoted himself to raising bulls, cooked his own victuals, and made his bed in seclusion.

Perhaps he had met with an early disappointment in love, was the poet's suggestion; or, as Dick phrased it, maybe his gal kicked him and took up with another feller; or perhaps he lacked the courage to risk a disappointment in matrimony, and, reversing Alexander Selkirk's views, preferred "to reign in this horrible place" rather than "dwell in the midst of alarms." In any case, his cabin wanted that air of coziness and comfort suggested by the presence of women.

The storm was over and the sun just setting when we concluded to ride on to Hetterick's, two miles further up the fork. The horses were soon caught and saddled, and the hospitable zeal displayed by our host in "speeding the parting guests" showed that our decision met his full approbation.

At Hetterick's the cabin was so limited, and the flaring pine knots revealed such a multitude of good-humored faces, that we began to entertain some doubts whether we should not have done better to have remained to enliven the bachelor's empty hall, and helped him to cook his lonely supper. Still every body, old and young, seemed glad to see us, and there was no hint of crowding or inconvenience. The dame and her daughter took our trout, and in fifteen minutes served them to supper, fried brown and crisp as doughnuts. The boys had already taken



REVERIES OF A BACHELOR.

our horses and treated them honorably. The family consisted of Hetterick and his wife, four sons, two grown to manhood, and a daughter between ten and eleven years of age, a grandson, and a hired boy. The other domestics were three hounds and a cat, with kittens.

The cabin was eighteen by fifteen feet in the clear, divided into two rooms—a bedded living-room and a bedroom proper—the latter five feet three inches wide by measurement, containing a double bed in either end, to enter which one had to creep over the foot-board. Although limited in space, all the sanitary requirements in regard to ventilation had been especially attended to.

The walls, built of logs, turkey-pen fashion were only partially chinked with moss, and still more imperfectly tapestried with various male and female garments, bunches of dried herbs, with some deer and fox skin stretched on the outside. This open place did away with the necessity and expense of window glass, and had several other advantages, as we afterward ascertained; for one could study the planets at his ease, and tell the character of the weather without the awkwardness and inconvenience of getting up to look out of a window. Jess also informed us that of nights, when he was sleepy, he could chew tobacco and spit through the cracks without s'ling the e





THE HIRED BOY.

oman's floor, which was a pleasing indication of filial consideration.

The living-room, besides the invariable bed, contained a table, a chest, a dresser, half a dozen chairs, and a wide chimney-place for cooking. There was a clock on a rude bracket, a coffee-mill at the window, several rifles with accoutrements on wooden pegs driven into the cross-beams of the ceiling.

We experienced the fact that a family of nine persons, with four guests, could be comfortably fed, entertained, and lodged in such apartments, but during our sojourn of several days we never understood very clearly how it was done.

Next day was Sunday, and as the aspect of the heavens was unpromising, we determined to rest in our quarters.

As there was no meeting-house, Sunday-school, nor religious service of any kind within a long day's journey, the Sabbath passed very much as any other day in the mountain *ménage*. It is true that all unnecessary work was scrupulously abstained from, and all who had any articles of dress in reserve made it a point to give them an airing on that day; yet, as the ordinary household duties kept the women quite closely occupied, and very few possessed a change of raiment, the difference was scarcely worth mentioning. It was, however, a day on which social visiting was in order, and afforded us the leisure to sketch the family and gain information about the country.

The head of the Hetterick family was a native of these mountains, about fifty-five years of age, with good features, light hair and complexion, broad-chested, and powerfully built. His countenance was amiable, and his manner frank and obliging, consent-

ing to every thing that was said with the grace of a courtier, and closing every sentence with an echo and a twang, a habit common to this whole region—"Ye-as; oh ye-as, I wouldn't wonder now, ah; ye-as, indeed, ah"—at the same time, after confusing you with the universality of his admissions, coming back with opinions of his own, which he sustained with true courtier-like tenacity.

Dick Rattlebrain undertook to pump him on the subject of his politics, and, to our astonishment, discovered that he knew neither the names of the great opposing political parties nor those of the Presidential candidates for the approaching election.

"Oh," exclaimed Dick, somewhat airily, "it's plain to see you don't read the newspapers up here."

Now the mountaineer, intelligently aware of some of the disadvantages incident to his secluded life, is very sensitive to any allusion to them, especially from a stranger. To his guest's inconsiderate remark he replied sharply, his mild countenance flushing red to the roots of his hair.

"Mister, ye're mistaken, I tell ye, ye are, ah. We do git newspapers up here, we do, ah. There was a feller fetched one up here last summer, and my wife she read hit to me, she did, ah. Wife, look ef that newspaper hain't in the chist under the head of the bed."

"No, it hain't," she replied, "for ye know ye lent it to Zed Kyle. Hit's three weeks to-day, and he hain't fetched it back yit; but he ort to have fetched hit back, he ort, fur I heerd of his havin' of hit up at Teters's last Sunday a-readin' of hit to them—much good mought hit do the likes of them!—and he mought git hit tore, so he mought; and hit will be many a day afore he sees another one."

Dick hastened to acknowledge the corn, and the *entente cordiale* was restored.

I afterward inquired privately of Dame Hetterick the name of the paper which had found its way into their peaceful and secluded community, and she gave me the name of a Baltimore paper, which name, she informed me, was printed in big letters at the top on one side. Madam, it seems, can read, and is the only book-larnt member of the family. She is a little vain of her advantage over her legal lord in this respect, and takes pains to cultivate her accomplishment, in spite of the scarcity of reading matter and superabundance of household cares. Except the newspaper alluded to, she showed me the only specimen of Gutenberg's art in the settlement—an extremely aged and well-thumbed copy of a Methodist hymn-book. In this precious volume, she assured me, she had read a hymn or two every Sunday for thirty years, and kept it up reg'lar for fear she mought forgit how.

"Then you haven't a Bible in your house?"  
 "No, indeed," she sighed. "When I was a gal, afore I got married, I remember my mother had one of 'em, she had, and I used to read in it, and I wanted her to give it to me for a weddin' present; but there was a good many of us, and she 'lowed she'd keep it till she was gone, and then one of us would git it; but she gim me this hymn-book, and hit's lasted me all this while. I've hearn tell as how they sends ship-loads of them Bibles to the heathens, but us poor lonesome Christians in the mountains gits none, we don't, ah."

Having thus established a sort of literary fellowship with the old woman, I seated myself on the chest while she was getting dinner, and continued the conversation. This was not difficult, for after the sluices were fairly opened my share consisted in listening. She opened on polemics, and naming all the religious sects and denominations she had ever heard of, gave each a passing punch or two, quite pointedly and intelligently delivered. As they all fared alike in her hands, I at length inquired what church she belonged to.

"None."

Here was something of an anomaly. A Christian of no sect; pious on her own hook; unguided except by the traditions of her girlhood and the greasy old hymn-book; yet, as far as my observation extended, her conscience and practice were as near the purest Christian standard as if she had all her life enjoyed the advantage of a five-thousand-dollar pew under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Plumpcushion in the great and enlightened city of Hubbabub.

Turning from the discussion of theological subjects, she opened another vein, which showed that neither seclusion nor dearth of opportunity had entirely deprived her of certain consolations so much enjoyed by her sisters in more populous and enlightened communities; and she pitched into her neighbors with a volubility and unction which proves that neither time nor circumstance can wholly suppress the human nature of a true descendant of our great-great-grandmother.

"So ye met Nelson comin' down the mountain, did ye? Well, he's a terrible civil-spoken feller, he is, ah; but he's mighty de-



DISHING UP.



ceitful, so he is, ah. He'll treat ye well if ye go to his house, and then he'll talk agin ye after yer back is turned, he will, ah. And ye stopped at Aaron Armantrout's? He's a mizzible, stingy old feller, ah. He hires hands to work for him, and he don't give 'em nothin' to eat. He's got bees, and don't give 'em no honey, and he won't let 'em tetch an apple in his big orchard; and for all he's got so many cows, he don't let 'em have no butter. He jist gives 'em dry bread and old rusty bacon, he does, ah—and not enough of that, ah. A feller that used to live with him used to come up here every Sunday and swear he was half starved, and beg me to give him some of our good victuals, so he did, ah; and when Zed Kyle's wife she died, ah, Armantrout had planks, and he wouldn't let Zed

have none to make her a coffin. Then the neighbors all got so mad, they said when he died he shouldn't be put away decent. Some 'lowed they would hang him up in a tree to dry up and blow away, and some was for flingin' him in the fork; but they all swore he shouldn't be buried decent, no-how, he's so orful stingy. That's the reason he never got married; he's too stingy to keep a wife; he is so, ah."

And so the worthy dame, on hospitable deeds intent, brimming over with smiles and amiability, went on baking, boiling, stewing, and frying her viands and her neighbors, until every thing was done and dished up. I had listened throughout with appreciative attention, and at table my plate was heaped and my cup sweetened to the rim by the grateful hostess in return for the "season of refreshing" my complaisance had afforded her. By the time our meal was over it was high noon, and the sky had cleared off pleasantly. Jess then announced that there was to be a "yoking" of a pair of steers over at Nelson's that afternoon, and offered to introduce us to the sport if we were so

minded. Augustus requested him to oblige us by describing the nature of the diversion.

"Oh," said Jess, "they have turrrible times, 'specially if the steers happens to be fractious. They hook and kick and beller, run off and jump fences, and sometimes breaks a feller's leg; they mostly cripple themselves or somebody else afore they're done with it. Then they have a keg of liquor; and there's some as thinks there's right smart fun in it."

The major had seen them break army mules to harness, and thought the sight equally amusing and edifying. On the whole, we thanked Jess for his civility, and declined going. He didn't appear much disappointed, and carelessly observed that he would step down to Tom Mullinx's, and proceeded to put some extra touches upon his toilet.

Jess was a fine-looking fellow, about twenty-six, and a widower. I remember seeing him, when I was here five years ago, with a new-born baby in his arms. The mother had died in giving it birth a few days before, and the brawny tenderness with which the bereaved father fondled the little nurs-



THE BEAU'S TOILET.

ling was touching to witness. He would hold it on his outspread hands, sitting apart and gazing silently in its face for hours. We fishermen, visitors at the cabin, came and went after our sports daily for a week, until the image of Jess with his baby, sitting like a dumb statue, made us sorrowful, and we departed for other grounds. Since then Time had wrought his usual changes. The infant had grown into a pretty, spoiled boy—granny's darling. The widower had grown gay again, and was going a-courting.

Jess was evidently the pet and pride of the family, and it was amusing to observe the general solicitude in his toilet. The old woman picked at his waistcoat and shirt collar; the little sister, Jane, tugged his coat tails straight; Job pulled the wrinkles out of his breeches legs; while the boy, Harney, pulled them up again to make the red morocco boot-tops show. Jess got off at length; and soon after his father, excusing himself to us, followed in the same direction. About the middle of the afternoon the old man came back, with an unusually solemn countenance, shaking his head as he announced the doleful tidings to his wife.

"Wa'al, wife, they've had orful bad luck down at Mullinx's. That brindle cow of his'n had two desput fine calves this mornin', and they're both of 'em dead; yes, they are, ah. The old woman she jist sot down and cried, she did; and Suze she was afeard to milk her—ye-as, she wuz—till Jess he drew her up in a corner, and hilt her by the horns, then Suze she milked her, she did.

And they wuz two turrible fine calves; ye-as, they wuz indeed, they wuz, ah."

The old woman looked up from the hymn-book over which she had been poring, prepared to express her commiseration, when her eye lit upon her pet poking bread through a knot-hole in the floor.

"You, Harney, you shill not waste that bread, ah; you must jist put it away till you git hungry, and then you kin eat it, ah." After this tribute to economy she took up the subject in hand. "And they're both dead, ah. Well, they does have mizzible bad luck down there with their calves, they does; but I always knowed it, for Tom Mullinx don't treat his cows right nohow, he don't, ah. He jist goes out all the time with that gun and them dogs of his'n, and he jist lets his critters and his cattle take their chance, he does, so he does, ah."

"Wa'al, ye-as," continued Hetterick, "I shouldn't wonder; but Tom is middlin' lucky with his gun, he is, and gits a sight of venison, he does; but the worst of it is them sprees he gits on over at Franklin—them's what hurts the cattle, and him too."

While the old folks were playing their parts I had also kept an eye on the children. Jane, the little girl, was the only assistant the mother had in her varied household occupations, and seemed to have no other amusement than what she might find in the daily routine of duties. The child's features were of the Oriental Greek type, and singularly handsome, with fair, florid complexion, and a profusion of flaxen hair ab-



A FLIRTATION.



to terrible  
they was at  
a looked up  
she had been  
her commens  
or pet poking  
floor.  
you still ne  
just just per  
and then you  
about to enco  
and. "But he  
they don't kn  
re with the a  
known it in  
cows right w  
goes on a  
them does a  
ters and his  
s, so he does  
outlined Har  
if Tom's w  
and gets a se  
re worst of  
r at Frank  
and him to  
as were put  
an eye on  
cas the de  
varied betw  
d to har  
she might  
s. The  
tal low  
with him  
n of the



JANE.

surdly knotted on the back of her head. Her figure was lithe and graceful, although her feet and hands were large, and her shoulders disproportionately broad. Always cheerful and smiling, modest and speechless, except when spoken to, she followed her mother to the milking, carried water from the spring, tended the cooking, set the table, and served at meals like a Hebe.

Harney, the son of Jess, at this date in his fifth year, being unavailable for work and the plaything of the family, behaved pretty much like other boys in like circumstances: he teased the dog, worried the cat, wasted his victuals, and tore his clothes. At the time of our visit he seemed to have the boot distemper very badly, managing to keep himself and the whole house in a stew over a worn-out pair some little lowlander had thrown away, and which had been picked up by grandad and brought home to him.

The following bit of comedy was played on an average about four times a day during our sojourn:

OLD WOMAN. "Now lookee here, the boy

will ruine his little feet with them boots; jist see how he's crippled with 'em, and a-cryin' and a-wearin' of 'em all the time."

HETTERICK SENIOR. "Ye-as, the boy is desput pleased with them boots, he is so, ah—he is, ah; but they blisters his little feet. Let grandad take 'em off, ah."

HARNEY. "No, ah."

JANE. "Now let sissy put the pretty boots away."

HARNEY. "No, ah."

JANE. "Now, Harney, do; they hurt his dear little feet."

HARNEY. "No, ah."

OLD WOMAN. "Then granny will bake Harney some nice heavy cakes, ah."

HARNEY. "No, ah."

JESS. "And pap 'll fetch him a new hat when he goes over to Adamson's store, ah."

HARNEY. "No, ah."

Harney perseveres in his "No, ah," until the agony of his blistered feet becomes intolerable, and granny is then permitted to bring a basin of warm milk and water, by the aid of which the boots are removed, and

he and they are put to bed together. After a rest he gets up and pulls them on again, and the scene is repeated—*da capo al fine*.

Next morning was bright, and feeling restless and full of meat, we mounted and started up the Dry Fork Valley to visit the place where Gandy makes its remarkable subterranean passage under a spur of the Alleghany. Five miles up we leave the fork, and crossing the dividing ridge by a low gap, we reach the Teters settlement on Gandy. The road we traveled was not much more than a cattle path, through tangled hemlock and laurel roots, treacherous beds of moss and black mud, in which the horses frequently sunk to their saddle-girths, and at every step ran imminent risks of breaking their own legs and their riders' necks.

Our party was fortunate enough to get through with only the loss of several horse-shoes, bursted girths, and skinned shins. Outside of the Teters mansion were several tame deer, who leaped and pranced round us, staring with their glorious brown eyes, suggesting all that is lovely and graceful in mountain life. Inside were dirt and a group of ugly, frowzy women, who looked wilder than their half-domesticated animals. The

men were from home; and when their astonishment at the sight of strangers had subsided sufficiently to permit them to speak, the women civilly enough showed us the road to the tunnel.

About half a mile from the house we found where the stream issues from the mountain, by three arched passages side by side in the face of a perpendicular cliff. The view here is so obscured by trees and a dense undergrowth that we concluded to ride around to the entrance, about two miles distant.

As we advanced the forests became taller and darker, and the path more and more obscure. After wandering for five or six miles in narrow cattle paths, all traces of man or beast disappeared, and we found ourselves at the *ultima thule* of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Riders and horses were both fatigued, and we were vexed at the idea of missing the object of our expedition. Before us was a brook. Of course it flowed into Gandy, and it was suggested that we might find the tunnel by following down the stream. A glance was sufficient to show that this was not practicable on horseback, and I therefore proposed that the party should dismount and rest while I made an exploration on foot. If successful,



HARNEY'S BOOTS.



come; and when the  
light of day appeared  
permitted them to  
rough shore and

be from the lower  
issues from the  
passages side the  
ruler cliff. The  
trees and a few  
included in the  
two miles down  
the forest here  
path now after  
entering the forest  
cliffs, all covered  
and we found  
of Anglo-Saxon  
trees were visible  
at the head of  
river. Below a  
flowed into the  
we might have  
in the stream  
that the river  
and I therefore  
lost my way on foot.



ENTRANCE TO THE TUNNEL OF GANDY.

I would inform them, and in any case would not be absent more than hour.

I started alone, and was soon out of sight and out of hearing of all my kind. As I progressed the lofty forest and the tangled undergrowth closed over the stream so densely that all direct light from the sky was shut out, and the brook held its rugged way through a tunnel of verdure, a twilight shade, not pleasant and freshening as one exposed to the July sun on city pavements might imagine, but dismal, dank, and cavernous, where one might see ghosts in broad daylight.

Was that a shadow or a human form I saw moving through an opening in the trees? I actually began to feel nervous, and looked instinctively at the capping of my rifle and my knife in its sheath; then laughed at my folly and pushed on my way. Again I stopped short, and my heart thumped like a pheasant drumming, for I certainly did see the shade of a human form moving with a creeping, stealthy step away off in the silent woods. Again I smiled at my absurd tremor. Might it not be a hunter stealing upon his game? These mountaineers don't regard game-laws, but shoot when they see fit. So I again went forward cautiously, with rifle advanced, and looking out for the shadow. There! it stands like a stump looking at me. It sees me! "Halloo!" I shouted at the top of my voice, and at the same time cocked my piece unconsciously. The sharp click rang through the silence of the forest, apparently louder and

clearer than my shout, and came echoing back with a distinctness that thrilled me; or was it another rifle that clicked? The shadow had disappeared.

Come, this won't do. Alone in the wild forest, beyond the reach of law and civilization, a man is the best friend or the most fearful enemy one can meet. I remembered having heard some uncanny stories about this region in former times, and our reception at the Teters settlement had left rather an unpleasant impression. The mountaineer meeting a stranger in the woods makes his greeting prompt and friendly. He does not dog his footsteps like a prowling wolf. While summing up these reflections I had instinctively begun retrograding, making my way through the darkest thickets which skirted the stream. In my excitement I threaded them with a facility which surprised me. I turned barricades of rocks and fallen trees by dashing into the water over boot-tops. It seemed that the faster I walked the more frightened I became, when my course was suddenly arrested by a challenge.

"Halloo! is that you?"

I squatted behind a log, drew up my rifle, and reconnoitring in the direction of the voice, presently espied the major leaning against a tree.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Have you seen a bear?"

"No, I've seen nothing; but thought my hour was up, and feared you might be uneasy."

"That was very considerate in you," he



an arched opening fifty feet wide by about twenty in height—a gaping mouth which swallows the little river at a gulp. There is no gurgling nor choking, but the stream glides in gently and lovingly, like a young snake running down its mother's throat to sleep, or simple-hearted Goody Two-shoes entering her grandmother's chamber. Altogether the scene is peculiar and impressive. Since Gandy left her mother fountains her course has been exceptionally bright and beautiful. Unshadowed by gloomy forests, unvexed by ugly driftwood, the gay brunette has leaped and danced through sun-lit glades, just teased enough by

replied, laughing, "for you were moving like a whirlwind, and from the noise I expected to see a whole herd of deer bursting through the laurel."

The presence of a friendly face so entirely restored my equilibrium that I became heartily ashamed of my panic, and determined not to make any further allusion to the cause of it, merely reporting that the road was impracticable to horses, and there was no prospect of finding the tunnel in that direction within any reasonable distance. Nevertheless, the recollection of the adventure haunted me for many days thereafter, without my being able to obtain by covert questioning or ingenious theories of my own any plausible explanation of it.

Mounting our horses, we retraced our road, carefully looking for a side path which might lead to the object of our search. After three miles' ride we found it, and descending by an easy slope, entered a glen of singular beauty. Hemmed in between a steep and rugged hill-side and a savage forest of dark-browed hemlocks, it lies soft and smiling as the ornamental grounds around some sweet cottage home; the turf, green and smooth as a velvet carpet, dotted over with groups of blossoming thorn; while through the midst winds the sparkling amber-tinted stream of Gandy.

Looking up the glen, the vista is bright as fairy-land, ending with a distant glimpse of blue hills. Turning down stream, a grim, menacing cliff rises square athwart the glen, closing it suddenly and shocking you with its unexpected propinquity. At its base is

moss-clad rocks and picturesque roots to make her laugh and show her dimples to advantage.

In the midst of her joyous life suddenly the dark cavern yawns before her like the jaws of death. Without a doubt or shudder, like an unconscious child she enters smiling upon the untried mysteries of the hidden world.

Wading in some forty or fifty yards, we find the subterranean stream still smooth and practicable, without any roaring or other indication of an interruption in its current. But its winding course soon shuts out the daylight, and as we had no torches, no attempt was made to push our explorations further.

It is said that persons have made their way through the tunnel, and the estimated distance from entrance to exit is a mile and a quarter. The distance around by the road is about two miles. The information on the subject was both vague and meagre, as the mountaineers are usually totally indifferent in regard to these natural curiosities, or superstitiously timid about undertaking an exploration. In fact, no one cared to talk about the tunnel of Gandy, and the idea haunted me that there was some mystery connected with the place which made the mountaineers rather avoid the subject.

Having partially satisfied our curiosity, we all at once remembered that it was long past the dinner hour, and we were beginning to feel exhausted from hunger; at the same time we discovered that the stream was wriggling with trout.



Our fishing tackle was speedily rigged, and in half an hour the green turf was gay with our spoils. A fire was kindled, bread, meat, and condiments unloaded from the saddle-bags, and in the shortest possible time a meal was served which would have charmed an epicure. This time we did not try the hot-stone recipe, but roasted our fish on forked sticks, after the Indian method.

Refreshed and invigorated by our meal, we took the road again, passing the Teters settlement without calling, and reaching the Dry Fork Valley about sunset.

It was quite dark when we reached our recent quarters, and were ushered in to the smoking supper-table with a frank cordiality which made us feel as if we had spent the day from home.

## JIMMY.

By KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD.



Jimmy and I are fellows for play!  
 Never tired of it, rain or shine.  
 Jimmy was six the last birthday,  
 While I was only—sixty-nine!  
 So little Master Commonsense  
 Gives himself superior airs,  
 Guiding my inexperience  
 By the wisdom under his own white hairs.  
 Sometimes it happens the hoary sage—  
 Over-anxious for Number One—  
 Turns to account my tender age,  
 And I am most atrociously "done."

No matter how it may chance to be,  
 Jimmy's argument never fails:  
 • The copper is always wrong for me,  
 And Jimmy is winner, heads or tails.  
 Well, I have lived to be boy and man,  
 Dad and granddad, and yet, I vow,  
 Never was I in my threescore and ten  
 Half so sharp as Jimmy is now!  
 And sadly the question bothers me,  
 As I stop in my play to look at him—  
 What will the Twentieth Century be,  
 If the Nineteenth's youngsters are all like Jim?

## THE MOUNTAINS.—V.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



SAFT SOAP.

**D**URING our whimsical tour I had derived no little amusement from noting the impressions made by the different members of our party on the various characters with whom they came in contact. Major Martial, as a soldier and cosmopolitan traveler, has dined with princes and Pottawatomies, and has the knack of making himself at home wherever he may chance to pitch his tent. A clever materialist and a man of recipes, he knows something of every thing, and can talk with every body, winning as well as commanding respect.

Dick Rattlebrain, on the other hand, who has been nowhere, knows nothing, jostles every body's prejudices, and violates all proprieties, lies oratorically, and blunders when he tries to tell the truth, who entertains every body with his reckless humor, and rebukes none with his virtue—Dick takes at once with old and young, and is decidedly the most popular man among us.

Mr. Cockney's agreeable accomplishments and conversation, however, are as much thrown away up here as if he spoke and acted Greek. The men stare in his face, and make no reply to his questions, while the women shy off and giggle, if they don't happen to get offended at his exotic politeness. His want of observation and adaptiveness continually makes him ridiculous, if not odious. With a dandy's horror of muddy boots, he can't make up his mind to accept rancid fat as a substitute for boot polish, and seems incapable of understanding how one

towel, and that only a bob-tailed wiper, can be expected to serve a whole family, guests and all, from Sunday to Sunday. When in response to his demand for an alkali the complaisant hostess sets out her "saft soap," his philosophy can't comprehend the purifying properties of the disgusting mass. He continually asks embarrassing and absurd questions concerning the origin and preparation of various dishes set before us, and needlessly exposes his ignorance of forestry and the fauna of the mountains. When he mistook Hetterick's sorrel colt for a deer, the critter's life was saved only by his missing it, which was quite as discreditable as the mistake. In brief, our friend Cockney is rather underrated by the mountaineers.

It has been one of the supreme enjoyments of my life to wander among these wild communities, until I have become familiar with their occupations, instincts, and aspirations as one "to the manner born," learning thereby to respect their unsophisticated manhood and appreciate their simple virtues; and it has sometimes appeared to me there was a grace in the woodland blossoms and a flavor in the crabbed fruit not to be found in the cultivated gardens of civilization. Yet now, while I rarely irritate a susceptibility or shock a prejudice, my introspective and secluded habits have been, here as elsewhere, a bar to confidence and good understanding.

Nevertheless, I had of late been dreaming daily that I would endeavor to throw off these dreamy habits and lead a more practical and sympathetic life, and to this end had cultivated an intimacy with the gay and athletic widower Jesse. Observing that he had conceived an extravagant admiration for a neat little powder-flask I carried, I took occasion to present it to him. In the fullness of his gratitude he took me aside, and, in a whisper, informed me he was the best rifle-shot on the fork. I had heard as much.

"Well, now," said he, "wouldn't you like to learn the secret?"

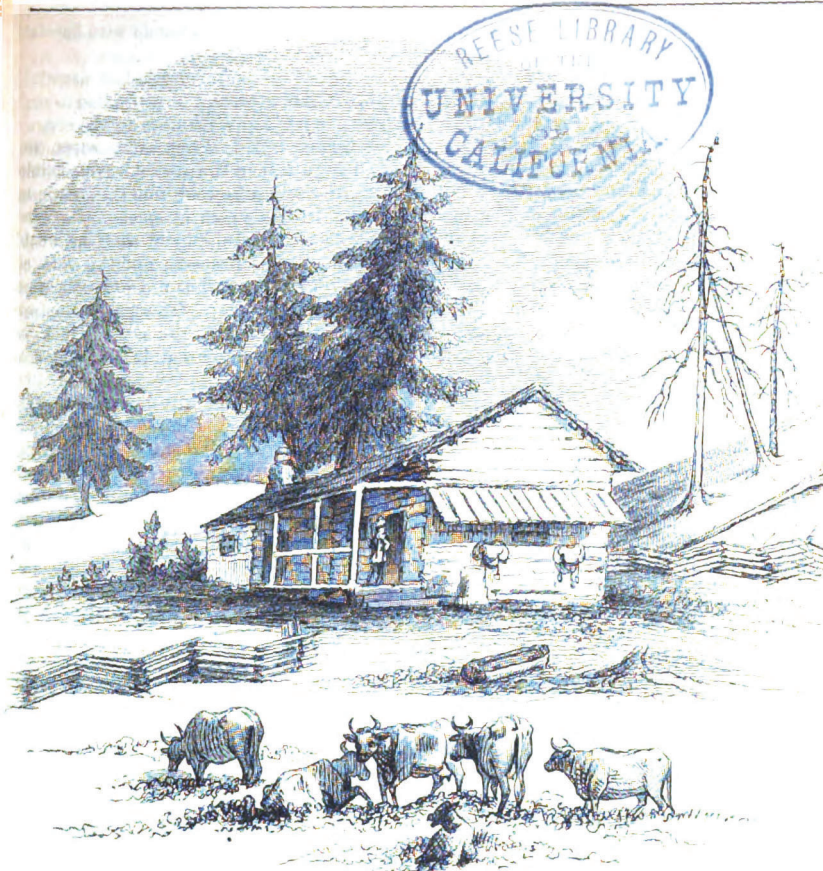
"Then there is a secret?"

"Yes, and I can learn it to you in a day, so that you can beat any of these fellers."

Jesse's proposition accorded so exactly with my humor that I eagerly accepted it. We got our guns, and privately slipped off together to the woods, where, after exacting a promise not to reveal his trick, he proceeded to put me through a course of instruction.

Whether there was any virtue in his teaching, or whether the mountain air had cleared my eye and braced my nerves, it is true that from a very indifferent marksman I presently became very expert with my rifle, and after





THE HUNTER'S CABIN.

driving the centre three consecutive shots at sixty yards, I expressed myself satisfied, and my tutor slapped me on the shoulder, and said, emphatically, "You'll do."

My mysterious disappearance had begun to annoy my companions, who complained that they had already been detained at Heterick's a day longer than was intended; they didn't see why I couldn't write my poetry nearer the trout pools they wished to try below. I had carefully concealed my private aims from them, but was now ready to start.

After a most friendly leave-taking all round, we mounted and rode down the valley toward Soldier White's. About two miles below we stopped at the cabin of Tom Mullinx (commonly known as Hunter Tom), hoping to have a chat with him on the subject of hunting in these mountains. He was barely civil, but not at all communicative. He told us very frankly that he never missed killing game when he went out alone, but he never had no luck when these gentlemen hunters went along. They had too many patent fixings, and talked too much. With his long flint-lock rifle, muni-

tioned with an ounce of powder and from three to five bullets wrapped in greased buckskin patches, he could always kill more game than he could carry home. Some fellers packed so much ammunition and cold victuals that they broke down before they found any game, and couldn't hit any thing if they happened to see it. For his part, he didn't see any sense in all these percussion traps. As the hunter made these disparaging remarks he cast a contemptuous glance at my ornate German rifle, which, being observed by my companions, drew a laugh at my expense.

"Mr. Mullinx," said I, "what do you value that bear-skin at which I see hanging up in the porch?"

"That skin," replied Tom, "mought be worth about four dollars over at Franklin."

"Very well. Now I'll bet you five dollars in cash against that bear-skin that, with this percussion gimcrack of mine, I can beat you shooting, three best shots out of five, line measure, at any distance or in any way you may choose."

Tom eyed me for a moment as he probably would have stared at a rabbit suddenly turn-

ing and trying to bite him. His astonishment presently resolved into a fit of contemptuous laughter; but as I had already put up my money in the major's hands, and showed by my manner that I was in earnest, his cupidity got the better of his contempt.

"Well, mister," said he, taking down and proceeding to load his long gun, "hit's not becomin' of me to disapp'int a stranger in a little innocent sport, and if you kin beat me shootin', that bar-skin's your'n, hit is!" and the hunter's face warmed with a smile of sinister benevolence.

"Laureate," said the major, aside, "I wouldn't give the churlish dog a chance to make five dollars so easily."

I answered, carelessly, "There are always two sides to a question, and I've taken quite a fancy to that bear-skin."

"Laureate," whispered Dick, "try to make a good chance shot, and if you beat him I'll give you my horse."

Dick's horse was a borrowed one, but his good-will was none the less appreciated. Meanwhile the preliminaries had been arranged—two best shots out of three, at sixty yards.

The major stepped off the distance, and Dick placed the target against the tree. The mark was a circle of white paper about the size of an ancient half-dollar, tacked upon a blackened board. We were to shoot alternately, and tossed a copper for the first fire. The hunter won it, and took his position accordingly, observing as he did so, "I reckon I'll have to shoot a little wild to give ye an opening."

As Tom raised his piece and leveled it at the mark all the slouchiness of his manner disappeared, and he settled into a pose of iron firmness. As his rifle cracked the target fell forward on its face, and Dick ran at full speed, followed by the others at a more dignified pace, to verify the shot.

The ball had cut the left edge of the paper with half its diameter. Mullinx chuckled. "There's a leetle wind," said he, "and I forgot to allow for it; but there's the opening I promised ye."

It was a good shot, however, and my friends looked blank enough as I took my stand. Their evident anxiety annoyed me, and for a moment a sense of responsibility unnerved me. Then I shut my eyes, recalled my lessons, and concentrated my mind on the work in hand. My shot parted; the target rattled and fell. The next moment Rattlebrain waved it triumphantly over his head, shouting, "Centre!" It was impossible for Dick to be exact. It was not a centre shot, but the whole ball was in the paper, beating Mullinx by half a diameter.

"Can you do that again?" whispered the major.

"I think I can do better."

"Then we've got the rascal to a certain-

ty," said he, rubbing his hands with hopeful satisfaction.

The gleam of benevolence had departed from Mullinx's face, and he proceeded to load his piece with a precision quite the reverse of his former half-insolent carelessness. He waited for a lull in the almost imperceptible breeze, and when he took aim the steadiness of his attitude was statuesque.

Dick Rattlebrain looked as if he would burst during the process; and the result of the hunter's second shot did not relieve his anxiety in the least. The paper was perforated just beneath the central tack—so close that we wondered it had not been knocked out.

Tom looked vengefully benevolent again. "I reckon, mister, I hain't left ye much of an opening this time." He said this with a wicked chuckle.

My friends looked grave again. Dick desired to give me some advice, but the major restrained his zeal, and persuaded him to keep quiet.

On coming up for my second trial I had a severer struggle with my nervousness than at the first. The opening was indeed a narrow one, and then my success had aroused hopes which must not be disappointed. I succeeded, however, in attaining the requisite coolness, and fired. The board fell forward as usual.

Dick Rattlebrain gave a convulsive start, and then, stepping up to me, said, "By thunder, Larry, I haven't the heart to look at it!"

But the major presently approached with the board in one hand and the paper in the other. The tack was gone, and there was a clean hole exactly through the centre of the mark. Dick uttered a triumphant yell, and nearly suffocated me in his rude embrace.

"Come, Dick; having won, we must triumph like gentlemen."

Tom Mullinx eyed me like a basilisk. "Well, mister, the bar-skin's your'n; you've won two, and hit's not worth while to waste the third shot. Powder and lead is too scarce up here to waste on nothing."

Then Tom approached with an air of savage respect, and asked permission to examine my piece, which he did very thoroughly. As he handed it back he observed there wasn't weight enough in it to steady his aim, and although he was set against it, there might be something in percussion after all.

Now I had gone into this contest to vindicate the superiority of civilization and the arts with a zeal somewhat sharpened by my antagonist's overbearing and contemptuous manner. Having won, I was content with the honor, and sincerely sympathized with the mortified mountaineer; so that when he came formally to deliver the bear-skin I politely attempted to decline it. But the flash of his eye and sternness of his manner quickly showed that I had made a mistake.



ing his hand.

brought him to

e. and he pres

sented him

the skin of a

he took care

to make it

presented him

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

the skin of a

"Mister," he said, "I don't like any man to fool with me. The skin is fair'y your'n, and you must take it."

A rousing swig from the major's flask was more appreciated than my fanciful magnanimity, and we took leave with all due civility. Yet there was something sinister in Hunter Tom's countenance and manner, which left a disagreeable impression generally.

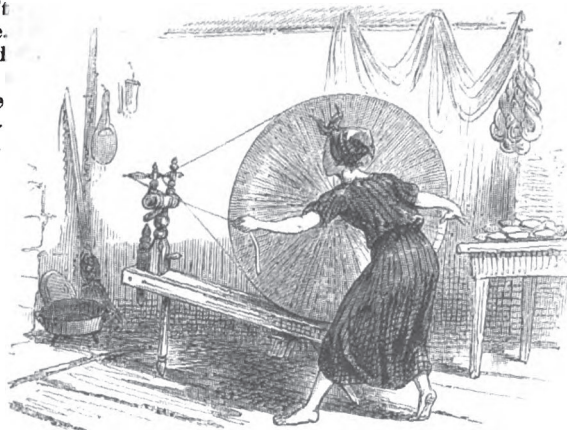
In complimenting me on my skill with the rifle the major expressed his especial gratification that I had taken down the boastful churl; and Dick, with his usual aptness at fixing a money value on moral and emotional delights, declared he wouldn't have missed it for a thousand dollars.

I defended the mountaineer by suggesting how very natural and excusable it was for men whose lives, fortunes, and sacred honors were concentrated in a flint-lock rifle to feel jealous of interlopers whose material and mental arms were of improved mechanism and wider range.

"I have just been reflecting," said Major Martial, "how absolutely what we call civilization is dependent on roads, and how justly the status of any people, historic or contemporaneous, may be estimated by a knowledge of its facilities for intercommunication. The classic ancients went as far as stone highways and oared galleys could carry them. The educated philosophy of China can not drag her above the level of carts, wheelbarrows, canals, and junks. Christendom of the nineteenth century blazes with the enlightenment of railroads, steamships, and magnetic telegraphs. The twentieth may possibly witness a still grander era of electric locomotion, with the air as a common highway, every man of substance owning a stable of flying horses or a family balloon. During the last two weeks we have had especial opportunities of observing the influence of these facilities on people of the same race, language, and traditions. From the luxury, splendor, and power of steam and electricity we have graduated, step by step, through railways, mud turnpikes, pack-horse trails, foot-paths, to where all traces of man are lost in the trackless wilderness. As we have progressed, the general appearance, manners, and character of the people have exhibited a remarkable conformity to the character of their roads. No roads, no civilization."

"Yet, major, you would not call the people around us savages?"

"By no means," said he, "for they are



PRIMITIVE ART.

part and parcel of a great nation, inheriting by tradition and maintaining by occasional intercommunication, difficult and obstructed though it may be, some connection with its magnificent civilization. Yet imagine them cut off from Franklin or Adamson's store for a generation or two, and no aboriginal tribe on the continent would be more savagely destitute of the means of improvement or self-sustenance. At present they have neither schools, stores, churches, taverns, distilleries, nor newspapers. Wheeled vehicles are unknown, and all arts ignored, except the rudest agriculture and some primitive domestic manufactures. In brief, their only highways are sled tracks and cattle paths, and their civilization corresponds."

"Still," I persisted, "is it not doubtful whether all our material advantages, our wealth and science, have substantially increased the happiness or elevated the morals of the individual man? Do we not see here health and cheerfulness, plenty without overwork, social order maintained by patriarchal authority, neighborly kindness, freedom restrained from license by simplicity of manners and absence of temptation? How much more than this can our brilliant world promise? How much less does it not really give us?"

"My theory," replied the major, "does not apply to individual character, but to states and communities. Some of the grandest men on record have been barbarians. No barbaric people was ever great; and for the rest, the most enlightened and elevated society rarely exhibits an individual whose life can compare in purity and simple virtue with that of the ox."

The Dry Fork of Cheat River is one of four parallel streams which, after an average course of about forty miles, combine to form the main Cheat River—itself an important tributary of the Monongahela. It is named from the fact that its bed is habit-



SOLDIER WHITE.

usually dry except in seasons of high floods. Its sources are in Hay-stack Knob, a point on the dividing ridge of Alleghany, from whence the streams flow in radiating lines toward all points of the compass; for there, within a short distance of each other, are the springs whose waters mingle with those of the Potomac, the James, the Kanawha, and the Monongahela. The channel of this arid river lies just along the western base of the Alleghany Ridge, running northeast until it meets Red Creek, where, suddenly turning westward, it loses both name and character in mingling with superior streams. Its stony channel has a regular and rapid fall, widening as it progresses, and receiving numerous living tributaries, which quickly perish in its skeleton embrace.

The largest of these is the bright and blooming Gandy, which, after a parallel course of fifteen or twenty miles, intermarries with her grim and treacherous neighbor at Armantrout's—as we may have seen a trusting woman, whose youth was a poem of flowers and music, pour the full current of her fresh and smiling love into the home of some arid, unappreciative mate, to dry up and disappear, as Gandy does some half a mile below the junction.

Brawling brooks come tumbling down from the wooded hills, full of noisy confidence, like provincial capitalists rushing into Wall Street, to find themselves “suck-

the river's bed, we may hear, or imagine we hear, the whispering and moaning of the lost waters deep down below, as if the ogre stream was dragging its innocent captives through subterranean passages to some deeper, darker prison. Then, again, the Dry Fork is not always a valley of dry bones, for sometimes, during the season of melting snows, or after one of those diluvial thunder-showers common in this region, the silent, grinning skeleton awakes to life, and comes down roaring and foaming like a maniac broke loose. For a day or two the stream is dangerous and impassable, then sinks again into its death-like trance.

“The Dry Fork,” observed the major, “is nothing more than an immense gully filled to the brim with loose angular rocks, discharging the waters of this valley precisely in the same manner that an artificial stone drain relieves our wet and swampy lands.”

“Quite likely, major; but I wish you hadn't mentioned it, as the explanation dries up all my poetry.”

At Soldier White's we found a regular two-storied log-house, containing half a dozen rooms, which serves as a place of entertainment to drovers who come up from below to summer their cattle on the fork, and to the occasional traveler who ventures to cross the wilderness by the pack-horse road from Seneca to Beverly, the county seat of Randolph. Here is also a tub-mill, driven

ed up” ere they can form a puddle deep enough to float a trout. Thoughtless little cascades, tripping and skipping through ferny bowers, jump down from moss-clad ledges, and are lost before they reach the channel. So they come, one after another, like joyous children with their dimpled faces and tinkling voices, sinking to death and silence in this cruel sepulchre. O remorseless grave, to whose dark prison the loveliness, the music, and the glories of earth are ever hastening, when shall thy ravaging cease, or when thy mysteries be revealed!

At certain points, by placing the ear close to the loose stones which form



[illegible]

He called it "a  
ute t  
which  
of the  
times  
White  
The  
of him  
who a  
Mar



### NOOSING TROUT.

sketched as a type of the mountain maiden. A sparkling brunette, lithe and graceful as a fawn, she is also, from the habit of meeting strangers, more affable in her manners than most of her mountain cousins. On being asked if she understood cooking trout, she replied, smartly, "You'd better catch a mess first and try me," indicating at the same time that there was good fishing just below the mill.



wand, with a running noose of horse-hair attached to the end. With an arch smile she requested us to hold off for a while, and let her try her hand. Creeping like a cat over the rocks, she marked a grand old voluptuary half dreaming among the shadows. Silently and gradually dropping her slender noose into the water, she drew it toward him. As the encircling hair touched his fin, it suggested a slight suspicion of mischief, and he slowly retreated to the distance of about half his length, then resuming his indifference again, lay balanced and immobile, very possibly felicitating himself on the superior wisdom which had enabled him to detect the gilt and feathered shams displayed to deceive the small fry of his race, and the lofty virtue which had taught him to resist the allurements of casual appetite. The next moment he was whipped from the water by an invisible noose of horse-hair, and wriggling in Martha's cat-like clutches. At this success the black eyes of the mountain nymph sparkled, and her plump cheeks pitted with rosy dimples. Quieting our applause with a gesture, she readjusted her trap, and presently lifted out another beauty, then another, and another, until she had captured four of the largest fish we had seen—one weighing two and a half pounds, and surpassing any we had taken with the hook. Having thus justified her own skill, she handed her angle to the major, at the same time instructing him how to use it. But neither he nor I had the dainty glibness of hand to execute the trick successfully, and after several awkward failures each, we gave up and returned to the house. The trout at dinner were brown as fritters, and verified another of the pretty maid's accomplishments.

The afternoon was whiled away with smoking, sleeping, and discoursing with Squire White and his sprightly daughter. We were given to understand that if we could content ourselves to remain a couple of days we might participate in some fun at the house, as there was to be a goose-plucking, at which all the gay society of the fork would be gathered. Mr. Rains, from Seneca, had sent word he would be over. Dilly Wyatt also would be there with her fiddle, and when she played it would set a cripple to dancing.

And who was Dilly Wyatt?

"Ye never heard of Dilly?" exclaimed the squire, with an expression of gratified surprise, as if he had discovered a defect in our education. "She's our brag gal over here, she is, and strangers like to hear about her."

"Then do tell us her story, to pass away the long evening."

The squire thrust his nervous, square-cut fingers into the shock of iron wire which stood for his hair, and after a preliminary rustling and scratching proceeded to deliver the following narrative, which we

will endeavor to translate into smoother English, at the risk of losing something of its original naïveté and graphic point:

"Several years ago there was a young stranger from the lowlands who was in the habit of spending the greater part of the summer months roaming about these mountains. What brought him here was never clearly understood, nor could the limited fancies of the natives ever suggest a plausible motive for his frequent visits and long sojourning. Some supposed he might be a drover seeking a lost steer; others reckoned he was one of these 'inchimists' who could tell brass from gold, and was prospecting for minerals; a third resentfully suggested that he must be an engineer locating a railroad—a nefarious contrivance to increase taxes and the price of land, which would scare all the game out of the country. Shrewder gossips insinuated he was possibly a refugee from the oppressions of lowland law or society, whose vague terrors occasionally chilled the hearts of free-born mountaineers even in their most secluded retreats.

"But neither the stranger's appearance nor ways seemed to justify any of these surmises. He was a handsome youth, with a wild romantic eye, and a cataract of blonde hair falling over his shapely shoulders. Reticent of speech and shunning companionship, he seemed to take delight only in savage and solitary places. The hunters sometimes met him in the recesses of the forest, tearing through the laurel as if pursuing or pursued by some 'wild varmint.' Then he would lie for hours basking beside a sequestered brook, idly watching the gambols of the trout or the movements of the uncivilized creatures that came down to drink and prey upon each other. Again they would tell of his reckless activity in scaling frightful precipices, or how he stood upon the summit of inaccessible peaks looking down upon the eagles. Always carrying rifle and haversack, he was so heedless of sport that he never was seen to bring in any game. With pencils and tablets in his pockets, if he ever sketched or wrote, the world never heard of it. A worshiper of Nature, who sung no anthem to her praise, and laid no votive offering on her altars; an Alpine climber, who kept no record of the nameless heights he had scaled or the lonely dangers he had encountered; a romantic voluptuary, content to revel in beauty and sublimity without the courage or ambition to rehearse his emotions before a cynical and unappreciative world; a poet without verses, an artist without works, a dreamer, an idler, a genius, whose life was a bold defiance, or perhaps an unconscious protest against a society domineered by mercenary traders in stock, 'whose speech is of oxen,' or of meeter speculators in stocks, whose voices are modulated by the rise and fall of gold, or the an-





EXCELSIOR.

without the risk of intrusion into the hallowed precincts of his ideal world.

"Dilly Wyatt was the only child of a widower, a stout herdsman and mighty hunter of this wild valley, whose cabin stood in one of its most savage and secluded passes. She was a tall, fine-looking girl after the mountain pattern, beaming with health and good humor, and uncommonly smart in all the learning pertaining to her people. She could cook and keep house equal to any maid or wife on the fork. She could shear a sheep, card and spin the wool, then knit a stocking or weave a gown with a promptness and skill that were beyond rivalry. Besides these feminine accomplishments, she could fish, shoot with a rifle, ride, swim, or skin a bear, in a manner to challenge the supremacy of the other sex.

"Our wandering artist had frequently stopped at old Wyatt's cabin, where, among other attractions, he found an ancient fiddle with which the proprietor had once amused his roistering youth. Being an expert on the instrument, he sometimes tuned it up and played for hours, to the great delight of father and daughter. When the men were gone Dilly took up the fiddle herself, and

"He ceased to shun the friendly faces of the settlers, and was frequently seen warming himself at their hearths, sitting at their tables, and even sleeping in their beds. They were entertained with the novelty of his conversation, and amazed at the extent and variety of his information, while he found in their simple society gratification of his natural longing for human speech and presence



THE YOUNG HERMIT.

being one of those who could turn a hand to any and every thing, she soon learned to play several airs upon it. Next time the visitor returned she surprised him with her new accomplishment, and he, perceiving that she had both taste for music and a will to learn, undertook to initiate her regularly into the mysteries of the art. His time and teachings were not wasted, for she learned with surprising rapidity, and soon developed very decided talent.

"Thenceforth it might have been observed that the erratic stranger was less frequently heard of in the wilderness, and oftener seen in the vicinity of old Wyatt's sociable dwelling, while Dilly's acquaintances were annoyed with her increasing absent-mindedness and continual humming of dancing tunes, both in and out of season. But it was natural enough (when wearied with his own lonesome ways) the teacher should find a solace in the company of so apt and willing a pupil, and that the mountain maiden, amidst her rude surroundings, should become enamored of her gentle and engaging art. Fortunately there were no meddlesome gossips at hand to suggest that it might be the artist instead of the art. The denizens of the dry valley are not much given to sentimentality, and we may proceed with our story without indulging in any needless or romantic surmises.

"One morning, after having given Dilly her musical instruction as usual, the artist stored his haversack with some cold victuals, and promising to return by evening, struck across the dry river and disappeared in the forest. The cottagers were so accustomed to his eccentric courses that his failure to appear at the appointed hour excited no surprise or uneasiness. Next day was stormy. A windy tempest swept the woods, and the rain came down like a water-spout. During the night that followed the storm swelled to a hurricane. Tree-tops were whirled through the murky air like thistle-down, and the forest shrieked and howled for the

downfall of its tallest chieftains. The Wyatts sat beside their lowly hearth glaring with pine knots, and occasionally enveloped in clouds of smoke and ashes, to which the father responded defiantly with counter puffs from his root pipe, while Dilly concealed any vague uneasiness she might have felt behind her darling fiddle. Anon the old man removed his pipe, and pricking his ears as if to catch some especial note of the tumultuous charivari without, exclaimed,

"D'ye hear that, Dilly?"

"She answered, with a nervous start. 'What is it, daddy? Did you hear any body?'"

"He motioned silence, and her straining ear became presently aware of a low rushing sound distinguishable amidst the fitful voices of the tempest by its steadiness and continuity.

"As they listened there was a sudden swelling of the storm, followed by a crash so enormous and stunning that it seemed as if a whole magazine of thunder-bolts had blown up at once. Old Wyatt started to his feet staring wildly upward at the roof of his trembling cabin, while the daughter snatched a flaming brand and rushed out into the darkness. By the flash of her torch she saw near at hand a freshly upheaved wall of earth and roots higher than the chimney-top, and stretching away across fences and cabbage patches the prostrate body of a mighty tree which had long overshadowed their humble dwelling.

"Come back, gal," cried the father, resuming his pipe and his stolidity at once. "The fork is up and the big hemlock is down, so we might as well go to bed."

"The second morning dawned through clouds and mists, which hung on hill-sides and tree-tops like sloppy rags put out to dry. Æolus was quietly folding up his flaccid wind-bags, and Aquarius resting languidly on his empty watering-pot, but the dry river was full from bank to bank, and careering like a mad bull. After breakfast the old man mounted his nag and rode away toward Soldier White's to gossip about the storm and look after a grist he had carried there some days before. Dilly was left alone to tend her household affairs and nurse a vague uneasiness about her absent friend. The day passed wearily enough between spinning, fiddling, and strolling up and down the stream, vainly listening for some signal call, and straining her eyes into the depths of the opposite forest. Late in the afternoon she was startled by hearing a distant rifle-shot, and hurrying up the stream for half a mile or more, she discerned through the mist the figure of a man emerging from the wood on the further shore. Flushed with the sight, she gave a ringing halloo which evidently struck the wanderer's ear, and was answered by a feeble



shout, like a cry for help. Then the figure tottered forward, sunk, and disappeared among boulders and thickets.

"Agitated with mingled hopes and fears, she repeated her calls again and again, awakening the echoes far up in the mountains, but no response from any living voice. Then, as if struck with a sudden thought, she hurried back to the house, and in a short time returned clad in a scanty linsey gown, bare-armed and barefooted, with a stout package tied firmly on the top of her head. Her eyes sparkled, her lips were compressed, and there was resolution expressed in every feature and movement. Scanning the savage torrent above and below, she hesitated for a few moments, as if instinctively calculating its force and speed, then nimbly descending to the edge, flung herself into the raging water. A few bold strokes brought her to the mid-current, which swept her away light as a feather in a whirlwind.

"The girl had avoided the

"The girl had evidently underrated the power of the stream, but she was a strong and confident swimmer, and in spite of the resistless downward sweep, continued to strike vigorously for the further shore, hold-

ing her head erect, as if intent on keeping her bundle dry at all hazards. Amidst the heaving and boiling of the mad current her downward course was so rapid that it was difficult to estimate her transverse progress; but as she approached a bend in the river, just at the head of a succession of falls, it might have been noted that the color forsook her cheek, and her efforts became more hurried and spasmodic. Suddenly, as if caught up in a water-spout, she was heaved over a submerged boulder and dashed headlong into the foaming eddy below. For a moment she was lost to sight, then her head popped up through a bed of yellow froth, blinded and gasping. Clearing her eyes with a quick movement of her hand, she saw that the bend and the current had helped her on her way, and she was almost within reach of the shore. Another desperate effort and she succeeded in grasping a trailing root, by which she drew herself to land. Once more on firm footing, she felt for the package on her head, and finding it still in place, hurried up the bank to search for the object of her solicitude.

"Nearly a quarter of a mile above her



## THE MOUNTAIN HEROINE.





OVER THE WATER.

landing-place she stumbled upon the body of a man lying prostrate among the bushes. Beside him was a rifle, dropped from the nerveless grasp; his clothes were drenched and torn in shreds; his upturned face, half hidden by the tangled hair and battered hat, was white and motionless as death. On the brave girl's face the dawning smile of recognition was suddenly quenched. With trembling haste she loosed the bundle from her head, and laying it on a rock, dropped on her knees beside the body. A few moments after she started from the cold embrace with a countenance all radiant with joy, and quickly opening her precious package, displayed

its contents on the sward—a cold corn pone partially soaked in muddy water, some greasy slices of fried venison, and a small flask of liquor.

"Dilly clapped her hands and laughed. 'Not dead yit, by a long sight, but only jist half starved. See what I've brung ye, my pretty boy!'

"But at the sight of the bread and meat the languid eyes closed again, as if in token of refusal. Then, tenderly encircling the youth's clammy head with her plump arm, she raised him to a half-sitting posture, and in coaxing tones half whispered, 'Now this ye won't refuse, I'm sure.'



"Then followed the resonance of an osculatory smack, as his pallid lips met those of the devoted girl's brandy-bottle. The timely stimulant assisted exhausted nature across the narrow bridge which led from death to life. The patient opened his eyes, sat up alone, and consented to nibble a little at the corn-bread and venison. In the mean time the indefatigable nurse had collected a heap of wood, and by means of the rifle kindled a blazing fire, and warmed a portion of the food to render it more savory and wholesome.

"Drink, food, and fire had so far restored the wanderer that he was enabled to give a brief account of his absence. He had strolled many miles away toward the summit of the Back-bone, where he was caught in the storm. Having eaten up his provisions, he undertook to return, fell from a ledge of rock and sprained his ankle, and thus, crippled and half starved, he had spent two terrible days in endeavoring to drag himself back to the cabin. Now he required only shelter and rest; but the stream was still impassable, and from his sprained ankle and general exhaustion he was incapable of locomotion. To a city belle the situation might have appeared hopeless; but Dilly 'was not born in the woods to be scared by an owl.' In a marvelously short time, with moss and hemlock twigs she had made a bed which, under the circumstances, might have been esteemed luxurious. A canopy of evergreen boughs sheltered it from the sky, while a blazing fire dispelled unwholesome damps and diffused

an air of cheerfulness around. The remnants of the meat and drink were placed beside it, and the hollowed surface of a convenient rock contained several gallons of fresh rain-water to quench the invalid's thirst, if required. Regarding these arrangements with a smile of satisfaction, the mountain heroine cut short a grateful speech by ordering her patient to lie still and get a good night's sleep. 'By morning,' said she, 'the fork will be down, and dad 'll fetch ye over to the house on his horse.'

"The stars were shining when she took leave, and walking some distance up the stream to find a longer sweep of unbroken current, she boldly took the water again, and reached the cabin in safety.

"Next morning the river bed was nearly dry, and by sunrise the invalid had been transferred to old Wyatt's cabin. He had slept profoundly, and was refreshed; but his ankle was fearfully swelled, and it took a fortnight's nursing to set him fairly on his feet again. When the time came for the stranger to leave he pressed a pretty sum of money into old Wyatt's hand, and thanked the daughter with a warmth and fullness of speech which ought to have been satisfactory; but there was at the same time a reserve and even stateliness of manner which rather wounded the warm-hearted girl. He went, and returned no more."

"And did he go off, and forget such a girl as that?" exclaimed Dick, indignantly. "By thunder, I'd have married her!"

"Very chivalric," suggested the major;



Vol. XLV.—No. 268.—33

GOOSE-PLUCKING.





DILLY WYATT.

"but in your case that might be thought a poor return for a heroic service."

"I reckon he hasn't quite forgot her," said White; "for hit's been the butt eend of four year sence he was up here, and every year reg'lar he sends some nice present to her or the old man. One thing was an elegant new fiddle, and the way she touches it it sounds like an angel's harp."

To-morrow she'll be at the goose-plucking, and we'll tarry to see the heroine, and dance to her music.

Next morning we were out early after the trout, trying to earn our breakfast before we ate. While thus engaged we saw a dozen or more girls crossing the ford below the mill. The scene was picturesque, reminding Cockney of "Humpty Dumpty," except that about New York the water is somewhat deeper. They were evidently *en route* for our anticipated frolic, and were chattering like a flight of crows, until they caught sight of the strangers. Then sudden silence fell upon

them, and they huddled like frightened partridges, those who had shoes dodging into fence corners to put them on, and those who had none waiting with their fingers in their mouths.

People who have become wearied or disgusted with the overloaded fashions of the day would naturally be charmed with the simplicity of these mountain nymphs. There was not a hoop, chignon, bustle, panier, flounce, nor furbelow in the company, and such as wore two garments had precisely twice as many as some of their sisters. Some had shoes and some had none, and such as were not absolutely bare-headed shaded their complexions with sun-bonnets, straw flats, or the more common and graceful head handkerchief. Favored belles wore ornamental horn combs in their hair, and were rather profusely decorated with bright buttons, gilt spools, and the tinsel used in packing muslins and calicoes, which represented jewelry. The breast of one fair dam-



sel was at once adorned and protected by the paper effigy of a spread eagle grasping the national shield in his golden claws. Attracted by the red, white, and blue, the major complimented her patriotic taste, but she didn't understand the allusion, and simply replied that "Sylvester Rains had gi'n her that picter last time she bought a new dress over at Seneca." Indeed, betwixt diffidence on one side, and want of tact, perhaps, on the other, our efforts to engage the ladies in conversation totally failed, and all parties were relieved when the pretty hostess came running out to conduct her guests into the house.

Here they escaped further conversational embarrassment by entering at once into the occupations of the household. A detachment, conducted by Dame White, went off to the barn to pick the geese, while others volunteered to assist Martha in cooking and serving breakfast. In vain we invited and pressed our fair attendants to sit at table and partake with us, for all were too well bred to commit so gross a breach of patriarchal etiquette, which teaches that woman's mission is to cook and serve. When her natural lord and protector is done, she meekly takes her seat, and enjoys her victuals all the more for not being stared at. After breakfast, while the materials for the frolic continued to arrive, I received a private invitation from Squire White to look in at the goose-picking. As we slyly peeped between the logs of the barn the whole inte-

rior seemed a whirlwind of laughter, screeching, and flying feathers, so that it was hard to distinguish the pluckers from the plucked. Occasionally, as the downy clouds subsided, one might catch a momentary glimpse of groups worthy of the antique—scenes that may be carved and painted more elegantly and easily than described—and as such we commend them to the Praxitileses and Photogeneses of modern art; and for a more practical account of the subject we must refer our readers to those good old-fashioned folks who raise geese and sleep in featherbeds.

Dilly Wyatt at length arrived, carrying her fiddle in a muslin bag slung over her shoulders. She was a buxom lass, with grand black eyes and regular features; but we were disappointed in her appearance, as we usually are by the personal presence of famous people. There are no two animals so unlike as the stage hero and the reality. Nevertheless, our mountain heroine showed, both in dress and manners, the ameliorating influence of her association with the Muses. No silly gewgaws marred the simplicity of her costume, while her deportment was frank and unaffected. Her musical repertory—viewed from a professional stand-point—was limited, and not of the loftiest character, being made up of jigs, reels, and dances, with several old hymn tunes for the adagios, and an occasional interlude of monotonous droning on the low, melancholy chords of the instrument, which



THE DANCE.

I guessed were her own "*pensées musicales*," composed perhaps during the long autumn twilights while she sat in the cabin alone.

The girl was robust in her cheerfulness, and took a leading part in organizing and directing the frolic, although I fancied, as is always the poet's privilege, that one might discover an underlying shadow in her cloudy eyes and a sadness in the cadences of her music—traces of a sorrow so true and brave that it scorned nursing and needed none.

After the mid-day dinner our party was swelled by a number of young bucks from the neighborhood, and the dancing commenced. The movements at first were rather shy and constrained, but a few rounds with the inspiring strains of Dilly's music warmed their blood and started the wheels of gayety to buzzing. We had all done our best in playing the agreeable to the ladies to avoid offending the jealous susceptibilities of their native beaux, and as strong drink is not commonly introduced at the Dry Fork assemblies, we had nearly got through the afternoon without an accident.

With his usual luck, however, Cockney narrowly escaped getting us into a row. Delighted with the opportunity of showing off his strong points, he had been exceedingly gay and prominent in the dance, but becoming wearied and disgusted with the succession of jigs, reels, and square figures, he asked Miss Roy if she understood the round dances. That young lady signified her willingness to shake a foot to any tune that could be started, and promptly took

her place on the floor beside the gallant. Encircling her waist with his arm, Augustus politely requested the fiddler to "please give us a polka." The mystified musician was silent; and the equally mystified partner, red as a trout about the gills, delicately attempted to elude the embarrassing embrace. He, entirely absorbed with the idea of electrifying the assembly with his graceful whirls, reiterated his call for a polka, mazourka, waltz, or any round dance, and persisted in holding on to his retreating companion.

At length a tall, iron-bound forester, who had been squirming with jealousy, forgot his hospitable politeness, and laying his heavy hand on Cockney's shoulder, exclaimed, "Looke here, mister. Our gals won't stand huggin' on sich short acquaintance, they won't, ah."

Augustus was himself electrified, and the house buzzed with mingled laughter and indignation.

The major, prompt in all social emergencies, stepped forward and explained the situation. Cockney apologized to the lady and the company, and the big woodman made amends for his rudeness by a grasp of the hand so friendly and penitent that it brought tears to the recipient's eyes.

The menaced storm being thus dissipated, and it being near sunset, there was a general interchange of compliments and invitations, and the party broke up—those who lived near at hand returning to their respective homes, and others, including the musician, who lived at a distance, staying over until next day.

## MOTHER MICHAUD.

It was early morn when Mother Michaud  
Paced by the guard at the city gate,  
Drowsily measuring, to and fro,  
The narrow length of the iron grate.

Still, far and faint in the twilight swoon,  
Where dark and dawning at struggle meet,  
Like her own pale shadow, the waning moon  
Hung lonely over the lonely street.

By winding stairway and gable quaint—  
Carved over again in shade below—  
By arch and turret and pillared saint,  
With lightsome step walked Mother Michaud.

Pleasant it was in the smoky town  
The rosy old country face to see!  
The high white cap and the peasant gown  
Brought up a vision of Normandie—

Normandie, with its fair green swells,  
The sweep of its orchards' flowery flood,  
Ways that wind into woody dells,  
Corn fields red with the poppy's blood.

There, in the corner, the wheel stood still  
That used to whirl like the bees on the thatch;  
The cherries might tap on the window-sill,  
And the vine, unloosened, lift the latch;

But Mother Michaud had left behind  
The sun and scent of her native plain,  
Far over the darkling hills to find  
The face of her youngest son again.

Nine long years had come and gone,  
Nine long years, since the April day  
When into the mists of the early dawn  
He melted, a kindred mist, away.

And year after year the bright boy-face,  
That never came back from that cloud-land dim,  
Beckoned her out of the empty space,  
Till it drew her at last to follow him.

Lonely and dark in the dawning spread  
The city's tangle of court and street;  
But the stones that answered her hurrying tread  
Had echoed before to his passing feet!



# HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CCLXX.—NOVEMBER, 1872.—VOL. XLV.

THE MOUNTAINS.—VI.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



SURPRISED.

AS our goose-plucking festival concluded at sunset, and there was no Champagne at supper, so there were no complaints of fatigue or headache on the following morning. The presence of Dilly Wyatt and several of her companions made the house so cheerful that we tacitly agreed not to say any thing about moving that day.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872, by Harper and Brothers, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

VOL. XLV.—No. 270.—51

After breakfast I had proposed to myself the pleasure of cultivating the acquaintance of our musical heroine, with the laudable desire of ascertaining whether the romance of her life and character found any expression in her conversation. To my disgust I found her entirely preoccupied and dazzled with Dick Rattlebrain, who, on the ground of his ability to caricature half a dozen tunes, claimed brotherhood in the arts, and put on a great many more airs than he could play on the fiddle.

Disappointed in this direction, I resolved to reimburse myself by indulging my whim for a day's seclusion; so, taking my rod, I started alone for our usual fishing ground below the mill, but, on reaching the road, turned suddenly up stream and walked until I came to the point where we had first taken trout in Gandy, full three miles above Soldier White's.

The pool lay still and beautiful as ever—golden-brown, with its bordering of green velvet turf and white flowering thorns. Clouds of gnats and May-flies were dancing over its mirror-like surface, ever and anon rippled by the upward leap of a greedy trout or the downward dash of the screeching kingfisher, all animated nature exhibiting the tendency of inferior estates to predatory anarchy in the absence of the centralizing tyranny of man. There, too, was my old arm-chair, dreamily quiet and embowered in shade, just as I had left it, with the empty mussel-shells lying around as reminders of my former occupancy.

I had gathered some live bait on my road, and now adjusting my tackle, impaled my worm and made my throw, with a delicious sense of seclusion I had not enjoyed since I left the spot.

The air was a trifle warmer than during our former visit, and the fish more fastidious, or mayhap to-day their dainty palates were set for May-fly or other fare than red worms, for they treated mine with contempt. I then tried mussels, white grubs, and crayfish consecutively, but they declined to nibble. So I thrust the butt end of my rod under a root, and letting the cork float round and round in idle circles, got out my pencil and tablets to catch some gilded whimsies that were swimming around in my brain.

But the situation was too luxurious for any methodical thought, and it seemed, as I settled myself in my mossy seat, as if some of the odds and ends of my former gossamer dreams still floated in the summer air, and fancy eagerly snatched up the golden threads just where they had been snapped by the summons to that famous dinner. It was not without a twinge of conscience that I felt myself yielding to a besetting weakness which I had condemned and forsworn. But there was no one present to shame my folly, and it would be a dreary world indeed if our

hearts were not sometimes stronger than our heads. Then there are occasions when we can scarcely be held accountable for the surrender of our wills, when, closing our eyes on realities, we perceive our unresisting souls seized by an invisible power and auctioned off to the highest bidder, going—going—gone.

How deeply or how long I slept I can not tell, but my dreams peopled the green banks of Gandy with a company of mountain nymphs, with their rude swains, threading the mazes of a rustic dance and rousing the echoes with their frolicsome laughter. Then I was puzzled to perceive that gradually their loutish movements and bobbing steps fell in more just and cadenced measure, their scanty and graceless drapery flowed in more ample and elegant folds, their wild drawing voices attuned to softer notes. Suddenly a queenly figure in dark trailing robes broke from the throng, and, approaching my seat, touched me on the shoulder with an ivory wand, exclaiming, "Larry Laureate, Larry Laureate, still dreaming away the precious hours and opportunities of life?" Starting from my sleep, I saw before me the form of Lady Rhoda, clad in her dark riding-habit, and extending the ivory handle of her whip toward me.

I was always inventing dramatic situations, and this was but a continuation of my vision; so, like the angel in the book, my soul stood with one foot on the land and one on the sea of dreams, hesitating and trembling.

"Fair fortune never favors a lazy fisherman. Fie on you! The trout have stolen your bait, and I have captured the tell-tale tablets where your heart's secrets are written."

The ear is quicker and more reliable in its perceptions than the eye. The music of that voice thrilled faith into my doubting heart, and the ungloved hand I kissed was warm and sentient. "This realization of a dreamer's paradise confirms my belief that Gandy flows through an enchanted valley. In the name of all the fairies, how came you here?"

"In truth, it resembles a fairy-land," said Rhoda, smiling and blushing, "but, I assure you, necromancy had no hand in our coming. The manner of it was rough and realistic enough. There are the horses and my company. Where are yours?"

There, indeed, stood Mr. Meadows and the two girls, while behind them were the four horses grazing with a quiet contentment that contrasted strangely with my tumultuous thoughts. The greeting was cordial and lively.

"We heard of your whereabouts from some drovers who came over the ridge, and the ladies concocted a plan to surprise you, which I have helped them to execute."



Here Miss Prudence broke in: "And we have succeeded better than we expected, or even wished—caught you asleep without a trout in your basket. I hope the other gentlemen have been more fortunate, or more industrious."

Mr. Meadows continued: "We left home yesterday morning, staid last night at Seneca, and are now in for a day's trouting, even if obliged to camp out. Something of your adventures we have heard as we came along, and now wish to be informed of your plans, and the present facilities for sport and entertainment for such a company as mine."

I briefly sketched the incidents of our sojourn in the Dry Fork Valley, without alluding to yesterday's festivities, which were nothing to the point. We stood upon the best trouting ground to be found, and the most appropriate for the amusement of the ladies. At Soldier White's, two or three miles below, there was lodging and entertainment comfortable enough to satisfy and rude enough to amuse our fair adventurers. While I explained these things a white cloth with an appetizing lunch had been spread upon the green, and it being past noon, it was discussed without much circumlocution. When our appetites subsided I was so taxed with questions anent my companions that I proposed to ride one of the horses down to White's and bring them up to answer for themselves.

"By no means," said Madam Dendron. "Our expedition was undertaken to effect a surprise. Having caught the picket-guard asleep, we will enter the camp unheralded. 'Twill be half the pleasure of our trip to witness the major's astonishment."

"I left them just going out to fish, and don't doubt but you'll find them wide awake and with full baskets." I spoke confidently, but at the same time had my secret misgivings.

So my new-found friends mounted, and I led the way to White's on foot, winding along the banks of the stream through narrow paths and tangled thickets of laurel and green-brier. As we drew near the house I looked in vain for some one to whom I might signal our approach, but all the adjacent woods and fields were deserted. Still nearer, through the open doors and windows, came a hum of voices mingling with the prestissimo altissimo notes of a fiddle. Nearer yet, and the humming swelled to a roar of boisterous merriment, while the old house shook to the chimney-tops with the cadenced tramp of many feet. Mr. Meadows gave me an intelligent wink and shook with suppressed laughter, while the ladies' eyes sparkled with eagerness as they began to comprehend the situation. On entering the inclosure there was no tarrying for ceremony, but all bounced from their horses at once. In spite of Rhoda's

imperative gesture, I rushed foremost into the room, but followed so closely that there was no opportunity to announce the company. It mattered little. So fast and furious was the reel that our entrance was unheeded. Dilly, the fiddler, occupied a chair elevated upon a table, the sleeve of her bow arm tucked up to the shoulder, her ebon hair flying in stormy clouds over her face and neck. Stamping in time with her left foot, her flashing eyes and ruddy cheeks recalled the fire of an ancient pythoness. A dozen stout mountain lads, the proprietor, the miller, the hired boy, and the three stranger guests, each with his partner, were



THE MAJOR'S PARTNER.

whirling right and left, casting off, promenading, and hey down the middle with a reckless jollity that rivaled the famous spree in the haunted kirk of Alloway. Indeed, things had got to such a height that I surmised some one had got over from the store with a keg of whisky. This idea was confirmed by my recognizing our quondam acquaintance, Sylvester Rains, among the dancers. There was Cockney, earnest and gaping, with the shreds and tatters of his city graces still clinging to him, as Phemie Bonner whirled him round like a June-bug tied to a string; and rollicking Dick swinging that frizzled, freckled little Peg Teters until her head resembled a dandelion gone to seed.

"*Inter ignes Luna minores.*" The gallant major shows pre-eminent, red as a full-blown peony; his forehead, denuded of its careful envelope of side locks, bare to the crown, and beaded with perspiration; his vest open, neck-tie gone, shirt collar hanging by one button, flapping and bobbing over his left shoulder, puffing like a porpoise, and putting the whole youthful assembly to shame by his activity and capers. He was overdoing it, perhaps, in the eyes of the newcomers, for I imagined the widow seemed at first a little shocked and grieved, and the younger girls looked frightened; then they

warmed up to an appreciation of the scene, while Rhoda's eyes began to twinkle, and her rounded cheeks broke into humorous dimples, and mirth carried the day.

Presently, with his bouncing partner half embraced, the major brought up face to face with our party.

In a moment's space one might have read a whole volume of comedy in the veteran's countenance, changing from roistering gaiety to curiosity at the glimpse of strange faces; then the gradual dawning of suspicion, incredulity, resolved at length into blazing, blasting certainty.

"Back to places!" screamed the musical director.

"Back to places!" screeched the bewildered lass, tugging at her paralyzed partner.

"Back to places!" shouted vociferous Dick. "I say, major, what's the matter? Thunder and lightning! why, it is, and nobody else;" and so joyful and headlong was his greeting that the girls had to dodge to prevent his kissing them all round.

The major, it seemed, viewed matters by another light. He had faced many dangers in his day, had stormed batteries and been brevetted for gallantry, but this surprise was rather too much for his equanimity. He clapped his hands over his face and ingloriously fled.

"Mr. Laureate, please go bring him back."

Rhoda's word was law. I followed him out the back-door, and overtaking him half-way to the barn, delivered the lady's commands. The fugitive turned and eyed me with a queer expression.

"I say, Laureate, what the devil does this mean?—no preconcerted plan—no malice, I hope?"

I looked back into the major's eye with absolute placidity, and quietly related my morning's adventures up to the moment of our entering the house. Then he gave my hand a convulsive wrench.

"Excuse me, my dear fellow, for an infernal old jackass that I am. And who wouldn't be? But isn't it a royal joke—superb—worthy of her wit and spirit?" and he slapped his thigh and laughed until the tears stood in his eyes. "Go; tell her I'll report at once—as soon as I can arrange my toilet: you understand."

So, having washed his face, smoothed his thin locks, mounted a fresh collar, buttoned his vest, the panic-stricken soldier resumed his air of gallant assurance, and returned to the field.

In the mean time the presence of the strangers, like angels dropped from the clouds, had been generally recognized; and the merry tumult subsided, the dance dissolved, and the music ceased. The gawky men, awed by the presence of cultivated womanhood, skulked into corners, or gathered in whispering groups outside the doors.

The shoeless maidens, for the first time dazzled by the mysterious power of fashion, huddled in humiliated silence around their queen. She, conscious of her position, laid by her fiddle, pulled down her sleeve, tucked up her elfin locks, and scanned the newcomers with mingled curiosity and defiance.

Martha politely conducted the guests to a private room, where they hastily rearranged their ringlets and donned some little braveries of dress, which a true woman never fails to provide against possible contingencies.

When they reappeared, Dilly and her companions remarked with amazement the jaunty plumed caps, the jeweled ears, the richly embroidered jackets, the fairy gauntlets, and exquisitely shaped booties of the glorious strangers. Why, that gorgeous bazar of their limited fancies, Adamson's store, must be but a peddler's stand in comparison with the stores where these things came from—if, indeed, the wearers were really of human flesh and blood. The mountain company looked up to their heroine for countenance and direction, but the soul that dared the midnight forest and the raging torrent had quailed before the majestic presence of dress. It was too much for human nature.

With ready intuition the high-bred lady had comprehended the situation. The major had just entered, hoping to retrieve his recent disgrace with a battery of assurance and a host of compliments hastily levied for the occasion. His guns were spiked ere he fired a shot.

"Come, Major Martial," said the widow, advancing and gracefully taking his arm: "our little surprise-party must not break up your social assembly, or mar the enjoyments of the day in any way. Present me to your handsome musician."

The next moment the Queen of the Mountains and the Queen of the Lowlands had clasped hands and stood face to face.

As Dilly enveloped the tiny velvet hand of the stranger in her own plump red paw, the defiant blood again mounted to her cheeks, and she met her rival's glance bravely. In the encounter a jeweled bow of scarlet ribbon dropped from Rhoda's cap, and on recovering it she playfully stuck it on the mountain girl's breast, with the request to wear it for her sake.

"I can not wear it, ma'am," replied she, returning the gift, politely but firmly. "It becomes your beauty sweetly, so it does: but it would make me look mean all over, it would."

"And what a magnificent suit of hair you have, Miss Wyatt!—just the color of mine, but so much thicker."

"Yes, they're both black," she answered: "but mine's coarse as a bear's, and yours soft and shiny as silk, so it is." And then



REESE 805 JAN 1886  
 UNIVERSAL  
 CALIF


JAKE NELSON, THE VOLUNTEER.

she ventured to touch her gentle sister's glossy ringlets, and smiled like a curious child.

"And you play so sweetly on this violin," persisted the engaging widow, taking up the instrument and tinkling a simple air with her dainty fingers.

"Can you play, ma'am?" exclaimed the charmed musician, her face beaming with emotion.

"Not on this, exactly, but on an instrument something like it, called a guitar. I wish I had one here, that we might play together. But come now, and oblige us with some music. Do you know this air?" And Rhoda hummed the "Chickasaw Nation."

Dilly eagerly snatched up the fiddle, exclaiming, "That's it! that's it! The very tune I've been trying to remember for a year. Please sing it again, ma'am." And the lady complaisantly went over the air, until the musician had caught and secured it on the strings of her instrument.

From that moment the Mountain Queen was at fair Rhoda's bidding.

"Now, Major Martial,

"On with the dance!....when Youth and Pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet."

"Shall I have the honor, madam?"

"Not this set, major," whispered the smiling widow. "Let us all find partners among

the natives. You understand? Please get me a cavalier."

The major addressed himself to several of the likeliest young bucks, but, to his amazement and chagrin, he couldn't find one bold enough to accept the proffered distinction. The louts stared, then snickered, and, when pressed, became frightened and showed an inclination to take to the woods.

The widow witnessed the proceeding, and, as she stood waiting, bit her lips and patted her pretty foot betwixt mirth and vexation.

At length Jake Nelson, a dashing bear-fighter, stepped forward and volunteered to lead the forlorn hope, emphasizing his resolution by throwing his hat on the floor and kicking it out of the window, saying, at the same time,

"Derned if I don't try a turn with the pretty lady, ef it's jist for something to brag of the rest of my life."

The major, determined not to excite the jealousy of his lady-love, insisted on leading out the hostess, Mrs. White, a lady whose face resembled a coarse wood-cut done with cross-hatching.

The music then struck up, and they all went reeling it merrily as ever, except that the boisterous exuberance of the dance was calmed by a presence which all felt but few understood.

About sunset, as usual, the rustic *matinée* concluded, and the company went home. After supper our party, lingering around the table, discussed their plans for to-morrow's entertainments. A visit to the tunnel of Gandy was determined on, and so the ladies retired to rest. We gentlemen spread ourselves on the grass in the moonlight, and amidst clouds of tobacco-smoke talked over the incidents and characters of the day's drama.

The major was evidently annoyed at the undignified frolic in which he had been surprised, but, like a true man of the world, only betrayed the soreness by his anxiety to conceal it. Nor was he much consoled by Dick's assurance that the girls all pronounced him the best dancer in the room, himself not excepted.

Augustus declared it was an inconceivable refreshment to see a well-dressed woman in this howling wilderness. It recalled the life and splendors of New York.

Rattlebrain suggested invidious comparisons between the elegant carriage and slender waists of our lowland friends and the gawky movements and churn-like figures of the mountain lasses, declaring that they looked like a different breed of animals.

I explained that the heavy, waistless body was common to the laboring classes and rude peasantry of most countries, and to antique statuary, which some people affected to admire and didn't; while the swelling bust, the taper waist, and undulating contours of

modern beauty were the natural growth of superior cultivation, ease, and refinement. Richard expressed his decided preference for the modern patterns, and as unreservedly condemned all antique females, whether embodied in the flesh or carved in stone.

"And crinoline—"

"There, major, you have touched the secret spring of modern progress—the underpinning of our boasted civilization.—O fair mother of our fallen race, perhaps the aimless, nameless bliss you lost in Eden has been more than recompensed by the mysteriously beneficent curse entailed upon your children! For in the six thousand years of labor and strife that have succeeded, what ingenuity of brain and skill of hand, what courage and enterprise, what glory and suffering, have been developed in the endeavor to justify and cover up that venial fault! what stately cities have been builded, what magnificent empires have arisen, what poets have sung and sages have written, what artistic genius has wrought—all to invent, produce, diffuse, defend, dignify, magnify, and glorify that mistress art of all arts, the art of dress!—Your theory of roads, major, is but the superficial view of civilization which mistakes effect for cause. For, look you, why do men till the soil, or delve in mines, or work in factories, or serve their country, but to get the wherewithal to dress their wives and daughters? And what are steamships and railroads built for but to carry produce to market and bring back dry-goods? And what are free schools and seminaries established for but to teach the girls to read and understand the patterns in *Harper's Bazar*?"

"I am convinced," quoth the major, with a drowsy puff. "Let's go to bed."

On the following morning I was out to meet the dawn, and made my toilet beside the fresh fountains that turned the mountain mill. Not careless and abstracted this morning, but daintily considerate in arranging my curling locks by the limpid mirror of the stream. It was with a thrill of satisfaction, too, that I saw reflected therein a face ruddy and bronzed, and felt my lungs expanded with an air that braced my whole frame with life and vigor. In the coolness and strength of these morning hours decide, O soul, whether you will dream or live!

An enthusiastic woman may fancy she could love a poet and a scholar, and would glory in wandering with him through the laureled bowers of his bright domain; but she deludes herself with a sentiment. The scholar's life is essentially monastic, and the poet must walk alone in his star-lit Eden. Would she be content to sit waiting at the gate? Love must have company, and a fire with one stick will presently go out. And I must now choose whether to wear the cowl, or gird on spur and sword and enter the lists





CIVILIZING INFLUENCES.

of action. Are not the prizes better worth the winning? Better a wreath of living flowers to bind the queenly brow of one sweet mortal withal than the peradventure of a starry epitaph!

I will live a man's life.

In this mood I gathered some trusses of the white blooming laurel, with a scarlet lily, and when Madam Rhoda appeared, presented my bouquet.

"This is most gracefully devised, Mr. Laureate. You have selected my colors, and I'll promise to think of you as long as they last." And the widow smiled archly as she pinned the flowers in her riding-hat.

"They will wither in an hour," I said; "but, with that promise, would to Heaven I possessed some magic art to make them perennial!"

My manner was so earnest that Rhoda colored slightly as she replied,

"Can not the poet's art give immortality to the evanescent flowers of life?"

Fortunately we were summoned to breakfast.

As soon as that was over our company

mounted and rode up to the mouth of Gandy, reaching the fishing pool ere the dew was dried on the grass. Here we stopped to give the ladies an opportunity of enjoying a sport which was new to them.

*En route* I had vaunted the luxurious convenience of my sycamore seat, and had hoped to have the pleasure of initiating the widow in the art of angling, as I understood it. But the major, evidently determined to recover any ground he might possibly have lost by yesterday's surprise, displayed all the finesses and blandishments of the fisherman's art, unrolling a case of silken and horse-hair snoods, microscopic hooks, and glittering flies, with such masterly assurance in all the terms and details of the business that the rest of us felt like children in the presence of the pedagogue. Although I believe Rhoda expected me to be her cavalier in the sport, yet after such a display I could not make up my mind to engage her in the handling of disgusting worms and grubs; and so she was presently balancing the major's elegant rod in her dainty hands, and listening demurely to his pedantic instructions, and

playing him with her graceful little affectations of inexperience. Well, after all, with a lovely widow at one end of the line, who wouldn't be a trout?

Rattlebrain and Cockney had taken each a young lady in charge, leaving Mr. Meadows and myself to entertain each other or amuse ourselves as we saw fit. We made use of the opportunity by finding a quiet spot and devoting ourselves to fishing in earnest. In the course of an hour we had landed over a hundred fish, and some of the first magnitude, while the other three couples had not taken a dozen trout among them.

Yet the major by no means appeared like a man who had wasted his time, and the ladies with one voice expressed themselves charmed with the sport. But as the sun was warming a little, and the fish getting lazy, and we had enough for all purposes, it was agreed to knock off and get up a light repast before starting for the tunnel.

Although the remembrance of his former exploits in this vicinity gave occasion for a stream of railery, the major was still looked

to as our "*chef de cuisine*," and he fully appreciated the increased dignity of his office as the ladies tucked up their sleeves and prepared to enter as assistants.

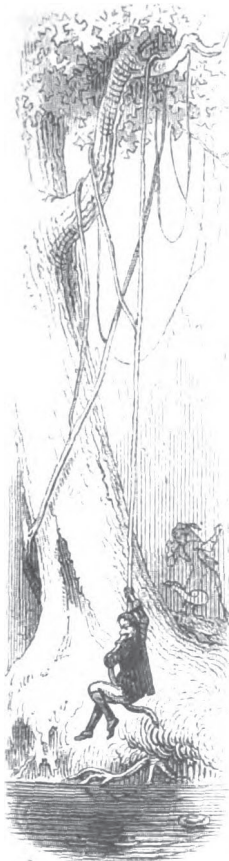
As the fire crackled and the cooking utensils were displayed, the major's brow was puckered with thought. His position was one of responsibilities, and might prove the grand opportunity of his life. Presently his countenance was illuminated with a brilliant idea, and calling Rattlebrain aside, he whispered something into his ear. Dick looked a little vexed at first, but after a moment's consideration, and with an apologetic glance at Miss Prudence, he started off toward Armantrout's cabin.

In the mean time, there being more cooks than broth, Cockney and Miss Lilly strolled away up the banks of the romantic stream. Shortly after the lady's voice was heard screaming with laughter, then shrieking for help.

Down went knives, platters, and fish, and we all hurried to the spot, where we found Miss Lilly in high excitement, betwixt laughter and terror, and her cavalier hanging by







THE SWING.

a grape-vine over a deep pool in the stream, at least twenty feet from the bank.

"Why, how on earth did he get there?" was the simultaneous question.

"Please don't stop to hear about it," exclaimed Augustus, in an agony. "I'm just ready to drop, and I can't swim a stroke."

But luckily there was a kink in the vine, and he managed to throw his leg over it, which relieved his arms to some extent, and lengthened his lease of life. In the effort his hat, garnished with trout flies, fell off and went floating down the current, followed by shoals of greedy fish, who leaped in and out of it, and tugged at it until it upset, and becoming

water-logged, lodged on a rifle. Notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, this trifling incident occasioned a roar of laughter.

It was cruel, but how did he get there?

It seems that on reaching the stream Mr. Cockney called his companion's attention to a lofty sycamore clothed with a grape-vine, which reminded him of the cordage on the mast of a merchantman. The lady suggested the idea that it would make a delightful swing. The gallant, desiring to procure her that gratification, selected a stout branch which hung in a clear sweep from a bough some fifty feet above down to the gnarled root. So he hacked away with his pen-knife until he had severed it below, and taking hold, pushed himself off, hoping to vibrate pleasantly up and down the shaded green. He went off gayly, but, to his surprise and subsequent horror, instead of returning by the route he went, he felt himself sweeping round in a circle, which gradually lessened, until by the laws of gravitation he stopped, suspended over the centre of a deep pool, five or six feet above the sur-

face, and hopelessly distant from the shore. Struck with the ludicrous figure of her beau hanging in mid-air like a spider, Miss Lilly at first burst into laughter, then, alarmed by his despairing looks, she re-echoed his call for help.

Meanwhile Cockney was not a trained acrobat, and his strength was evidently giving way.

"I've a mind to throw him a fly and reel him in," said the major; "I see no other resource."

"But, seriously," exclaimed the tender-hearted Rhoda, "can't something be done for him?" and she glanced at me.

"Excuse the emergency, ladies," I said, throwing off my coat and shoes, ready for the plunge.

"Wait a moment," cried Mr. Meadows; "come help me to launch this log."

Major Martial and myself hurried up to his assistance, and by our united efforts rolled a large drift log into the water, and set it afloat in the current.

"Now take your chance, Augustus, and as the log floats under, drop and catch it, and don't mind a ducking."

The cynosure of all eyes, Cockney endeavored to nerve himself to the emergency; but the current was slow, and when at length the ark of safety arrived, he was so exhausted that he dropped unsteadily, and plumped headlong into the stream. I at once plunged in, and reaching the log, threw myself half over it, seized the struggling Cockney by the arm, and drew him up, so that we floated on opposite sides, like panniers across a mule's back.

"Now get your breath and keep cool, and we're all safe."

Cheers three times three rang out from the shore, and I recognized a voice that warmed me to my finger ends. Cockney spit out the superfluous water he had swallowed, and gurgling his thanks, assured me that he was perfectly cool.

"I don't doubt it, my boy; but cease your struggles and float quietly, or you will set the log to rolling, which will drown one of us, and that won't be me."

Hastening the speed of our heavy craft with some well-timed paddling, we at length felt bottom, and waded safely to shore.

"Come to the fire! Shawls! Brandy! What can we do for you?"

"Loving friends, please proceed with the preparations for dinner, while we go hang ourselves—in the sun to dry."

The water was delightful, and the atmosphere verging on sultriness, so that as we basked on the grass the results of our adventure seemed rather agreeable than otherwise.

"Mr. Laureate," said my companion, for the first time addressing me in an unconstrained and confidential tone, "I came out



RIDING DOUBLE.

on this expedition for the purpose of seeing some wild life and to improve my health. My greenness has subjected me to a good deal of raillery, which I have taken in good part, as it is no doubt intended; but I have observed that you, at least, have always been considerate, and to-day your conduct has been more than gentlemanly. Now rest assured, if you should ever come to New York, I'll—"

"Oh, *'siccatura!*" Please dry up as soon as possible, and let us see how dinner is progressing."

Dick had returned from Armantrout's with a big iron pot laden with butter, eggs, onions, potatoes, greens, a pair of chickens, and various other green-groceries which have slipped my memory. Coming back he was overtaken by Peg Teters, on her way home, and being rather overloaded with the results of his forage, cheerfully accepted her offer of assistance, and they came in carrying the pot between them. Thus introduced, Peggy saluted her yesterday's ball-room acquaintances, and tucking up her sleeves, went into the kitchen with such a will that our butterfly ladies soon dropped into the background, leaving the field to the chief and his new assistant. She picked and dressed the chickens in a trice, took the heavy pot by the ears, and jerked it here and there until the major was satisfied with its standing. I don't think the chief was at all pleased with the change; but he was in for it, and couldn't back down. He had prom-

ised a grand "*pot-pourri*"—a famous camp mess, in the composition of which he was eminently skilled. The chickens and a square of middling went in first as a basis; then butter, eggs, milk, fish, and all the roots, vegetables, and fruits that the season and locality afforded.

The major stirred and sweltered; then passing the ladle to the officious Peggy, he poked the fire with a forked stick, wiped the beads of perspiration from his face, and facetiously called for more game to flavor his mess.

Dick maliciously amused himself gathering all manner of unusual ingredients for the "*witches' caldron*," as he called it. Frogs, cray-fish, tomtits, ground-squirrels—all were dressed and went in without question. At length he handed over a jar of pickles which the ladies had brought out with their stores.

"Admirable!" exclaimed the major, emptying it into the pot. The girls screamed and scolded at the loss of their favorite relish.

"Now, major," exclaimed Prudence, "just throw in Mr. Rattlebrain, and your mess will be complete."

"Excuse me, ladies. We'll serve him separately—as a devil."

"Any way to please," retorted Dick, "except on a hot stone. Now spread your cloth and circulate your platters. The stew is ready."

The chief, with beaming face, ladled it out



with a tin cup, apologizing the while for the deficiencies of his savory mess.

"A little later in the season," said he, "with a greater variety of vegetables and game, it is really a dish worthy of a royal table and a campaigner's appetite."

When the meal was over we prepared to ride up to the tunnel. As every body was horsed and ready to start off, our guest and assistant cook remarked that she lived up nigh the tunnel, and knowed a shorter and better road than that up the fork.

This was an item worth consideration. But how was our guide to travel?

"Oh, I'm afoot!" said she; "but it makes no difference, unless one of you fellers chooses to gim me a lift."

Now the major had been a little overdone in this direction, and he whirled away with a suddenness that was almost rude. Dick and Augustus had evidently both made up their minds to a *tête-à-tête chevaleresque*, and Mr. Meadows was loaded fore and aft with valises and bundles containing the extra wrappings of his charges. I didn't see that I was especially called upon to play the knight-errant in this case, and the obliging lass was in a fair way to be left behind unnoticed. Rhoda, however, was more considerate, declaring it was both rude and impolitic to reject the girl's offer, and very sweetly proposed to give her a seat behind herself. The major protested and the widow persisted, until I fancied she sought the occasion to check the ardor of her cavalier's conversation by the way. But Peggy bluntly cut short the argument:

"I'm much 'bliged to ye, ma'am, I am, but wimmen sets so cranky on a horse I always conceit I'm a-goin' to fall off when I'm behind one of 'em; and ef none of the fellers will gim me a lift, I'd as lief walk." And she turned away pouting.

My chivalric temper could not resist his, and I forthwith concluded to sacrifice myself. The clouds dissipated, and Peggy jumped upon a log, and was up in a twinkling. I had never considered the third party in the arrangement; but the mountain nymph had scarcely touched her seat when my spirited mare resented such double-dealing by a volley of furious kicks, roaching her back, rearing and buck-jumping consecutively, as if she was trying to get out of her skin. Peggy clasped my waist with a suffocating grip, laughing the while like a flock of ganders, in which insulting hilarity the whole company joined. I commenced with the modern horse-taming theory of soothing and coaxing, but presently took fire and blazed away with whip and spur. The implacable beast fought back savagely, varying her outrageous performances with attempts to bite and roll. Amidst the general heartlessness it was charming to find one friend who remembered his grateful promises. Apologizing to his

lady companion, Augustus rode up as near to the bouncing group as he dared approach, and with sincere politeness offered to exchange horses with me, Miss Meadows having assured him the one he rode would carry double.

"Get out of the way," I replied, fiercely, for my blood was up. "I'll tame her if she was the devil."

"Bravo! bravissimo!" shouted the spectators.

Peggy said, "Derned if she couldn't stick it out ef I could," and jolted out some remarks about the disadvantage of a woman's



A SUGGESTION.

being obliged to sit sideways on a horse, which alarmed me, lest the absurdity of my position might be climaxed by an attempt on her part to put these "women's rights" ideas into practice. At length my roan, having danced and kicked away her superfluous vigor, started briskly up the road, once more acknowledging a master's authority.

By following Peggy's directions we reached the paternal settlement in about two hours, and by a much better and more direct road than that pursued on a former occasion. *En route* I took the opportunity of questioning my guide about the tunnel, and although talkative enough on other subjects, she avoided this in a manner which convinced me that she knew more than she chose to tell. When I rode up to the house and delivered the young lady to her father, who stood in the door, he gave me only a wild, suspicious stare for my pains. Peggy, more civil, went through the form of asking me to 'light, but I declined, and hurried to rejoin my company on their way to the upper entrance of the tunnel.

On arriving there our friends agreed that the scene fully justified our description. The ride had been fatiguing, and we threw



THE EXIT OF GANDY.

ourselves in groups upon the grass, while the major brewed some toddy. Then, after a brief but pleasant sojourn, we rose to resume our homeward journey. Whether piqued by one of Miss Primrose's smart speeches, or heated with too much toddy, Rattlebrain suddenly became obstreperous, and proposed to explore the tunnel alone, light or no light. As Miss Prue entered no protest, and no one else objected, he gave it up, and declared his intention to walk directly over the ridge and meet us at the lower opening.

This I thought quite practicable, and as I had some curiosity to hear his report of the trip, I protested loudly against the rashness of the undertaking; whereupon he rushed up the mountain-side and was presently out of sight.

"Is the foolish boy really going?" asked the major, calling after him.

"He'll probably get lost and detain us waiting for him," suggested Mr. Meadows.

Miss Primrose being requested to recall her errant knight, firmly and contemptuously declined, declaring that, in her opinion, a little combing through the laurel would be of service to him.

Supposing the distance something shorter than by the road, we concluded to ride back to the lower opening, leading Dick's horse, hoping to meet our adventurous companion there in a better humor after his walk.

On reaching there we found no one, and dismounted to examine the locality, which is more interesting in some respects, but not so pleasingly picturesque as the entrance. After its subterranean course the stream here re-enters the world, gushing like a magnificent fountain through three arched openings side by side—a beautiful object, but so closed in by the forest growth that it is difficult to get a satisfactory view.

Time was passing, and yet no news of Dick. We began to grow anxious and rest-

ive; shouted and fired signal guns, to no purpose; then became indignant, and finally determined to wait until four o'clock, and if he did not appear by that hour to leave his horse at Teters's, and ride back to our lodging-place at White's.

For the first time since morning I improved the opportunity of a *tête-à-tête* with Rhoda. I was flattered to observe my floral gift, though faded and drooping, still worn in her hat, and offering her my arm, we strolled away from the company to seek a better view of the dark portals in the mountain. She was thoughtful, a little fa-

tigued, perhaps, and we soon found a convenient seat on a moss-cushioned stone.

"How strange and wildly beautiful!" I said. "And if we could fancy this lovely stream a sentient being, conscious of its former bright and blooming life, its subsequent dark and dreary imprisonment, how exquisite the joy to emerge again into a world of flowers and sunshine!"

"Why, then her life would be too human—a counterpart, a history. Better it should flow on laughing and sparkling, without remembrance of the past or dread of the future." As she spoke Rhoda's voice quavered with emotion, and a tear coursed down her cheek, the first I had ever seen dim her bright eye.

I felt a thrill as one who unwittingly finds himself upon the threshold of a sanctuary, and withdraws in silence. Yet the widow's eyes shone more touchingly beautiful through that softening haze than when flashing in unveiled light. The shallow fountains and April showers of our weeping beauties we all understand, and get tired of sometimes, but save us from the tearful moments of a brave and spirited woman. I was speechless, yet Rhoda could not fail to read what was written on the face into which she was looking. She did, I am sure, for hers became suffused, and her violet eyelids suddenly fell.

Then the major's voice sounded like a warning trumpet—"Four o'clock." Rising hastily and taking my proffered arm, my companion smiled, and broke the awkward silence which had fallen upon us by a commonplace remark.

"Our friend the major seems impatient. It must be getting late, and we must ride."

"I have determined to remain."

"Do you think it necessary?" she said in a reproachful tone. "I had hoped to have your company on our homeward ride."

I explained by suggesting my apprehen-



sions about our young comrade's safety, and thought it scarcely generous to abandon him under the circumstances.

Rhoda scanned me with a look of earnest and penetrating inquiry.

"Mr. Laureate, you are chivalric in your ideas of generosity and self-sacrifice. I have remarked it repeatedly to-day."

"You estimate trifles too highly, madam."

"Trifles?" she repeated, with a pettish curl of her pretty lip.

"Trifles as they must appear to you, who can not possibly understand the extent of the sacrifice I am making even now."

Her eye lit up with a roguish sparkle, and extending her hand, she said, "There, I won't pout, but will endeavor both to understand and appreciate you. Carry out your generous purpose, but rejoin us as soon as possible; and remember, we return to Moorfield to-morrow morning. Good-by."

The envious major witnessed that leave-taking, I am sure, for his voice had a peremptory and impatient twang as it rung out, "Four o'clock and ten minutes."

We parted, and I was left alone with my thoughts and the two horses. The animals stamped, fretted, and whinnied after their departing companions, while I sunk sullenly on a stone, vituperating Dick Rattlebrain and his follies in a manner which robbed my seeming friendly devotion of all merit. Then I forgot him, and my thoughts went wool-gathering in an opposite direction; and what with summing up the events of the last two days, the spoken words, the significant looks, and insignificant incidents, interpreted one by another's light, it seemed as if the fleece I gathered was all golden. Then I started up like one in sudden alarm, for my gold, after all, was but the slanting sheen from the western sky, trickling through the dark forest and betokening sunset.

Nothing yet of my lost comrade; night was coming on, and all feeling of resentment was now absorbed in anxiety for his safety. Stretching my limbs, stiffened by an hour's immobility, I looked at the capping of my rifle, and started up the hill-side to reconnoitre the country in the direction from which I thought he must approach. Its general topographical features were so prominent that it seemed impossible for a man of ordinary sagacity to miss his way; yet the spurs and wrinkles of the mountain were on so grand a scale, so broken with ravines and rocky precipices, and barred with fallen timber and tangled undergrowth, that a skillful woodman might readily lose the direction to a given point, and wear out his strength in aimless wanderings within a very limited space. I succeeded in winding upward until I stood over the cliff from whence the stream issued, and then pushed

forward across the spur in what I supposed to be the direction of the entrance. The way was overshadowed by a pall of hemlocks, with a dense undergrowth of laurel, which found rooting and nourishment amidst a mass of rugged boulders covered with damp and spongy moss. At every step there was a risk of falling into crevices of appalling depth, sometimes visible, oftener concealed like pitfalls with deceitful coverings of moss and leaves.

From time to time I could hear strange sounds coming up from the cavernous earth, the winds and the waters which moaned and jabbered articulately like human voices, re-awakening the half-superstitious terrors which had formerly seized me in this desolate forest. Once I fancied that a current of heated air rushed up across my damp face with a distinct odor of burning wood. Then I tripped and fell athwart an opening—God knows how deep. Caught on a net-work of slimy roots, the jar made me fancy I saw sparks away down in the darkness. But no. On rising I perceived it must have been only the reflection from a flash of sunlight which at the moment lit up the bare, grinning precipice on my left. It was cheering to catch even that momentary glimpse of the clear blue sky and the laurel-draped cliff, gilt with the last rays of the setting sun.

As I stood to gaze I saw something moving on a ledge thirty or forty feet above, and at length perceived two fiery eyes glaring downward, and my blood was stirred by a long-drawn savage howl.

I again remembered Jesse's secret, and steadying my rifle against the side of a hemlock-tree, took aim and fired. With a rushing sound, followed by a crash, the body of a large wolf fell into the thicket nearly at my feet. Neither my shot nor the fall had quite killed the savage beast, which, writhing and snarling in its death agony, bit frantically at its wounds, sticks, leaves, and every thing within its reach. Staining the rocks and moss with its life-blood, its struggles gradually subsided, and at length, with a spasmodic shiver, it stretched itself out and died.

Drawing my knife, I approached the body, and discovered that the creature was a female, and evidently had a young family somewhere up in the cliff. But this was no time to be speculating about game, so I was contented to take the scalp as a trophy, and congratulating myself that I had probably broken up a whole family of robbers, I proceeded to reload my piece.

As I was about resuming my march I fancied I heard a distant rustling of the bushes, with the measured tread of a human foot, and my heart bounded at the thought of meeting my comrade at this triumphant moment; and with this fortunate conclusion of the day's adventures, I was already elated





THE WOLF.

with the hope of rejoining our friends at Soldier White's before bed-time.

I had not advanced many paces ere, through a vista in the darkling wood, I saw again that moving shadow of a man, and with the sight came that curdling of the blood and sinking of the heart which I could neither control nor explain. I knew it was not my lost comrade, but unmistakably that same weird, inexplicable presence.

But I was in better nerve now; my hunter's blood was up, and I thought to send a bullet to test its humanity; but ere the mad purpose was accomplished my enemy had disappeared. Darkness was already closing around, and, with every faculty strained to the utmost, I made my way back to where I had left the horses, without a detour or false step. Their nickering welcome was a most cheerful and companionable sound. Mounting my own mare and leading the other, I presented myself at the Teters mansion just as the full moon rose above the tree-tops.

My demand for food and shelter was coldly responded to, but I was in no mood to be trifled with, and felt prepared to take with a high hand what their churlishness might refuse. A little assertion induced a loutish, half-witted boy to attend to my horses. On entering the house I found the table garnished with some ill-looking hunks of boiled meat, a corn pone, and a crock of bonny-clabber. At the moment my acquaintance Peggy entered, and the cordiality of her greeting seemed to put me on a better footing with

the family, and I was invited to partake of the unsavory supper.

During the meal I took occasion to narrate the circumstances connected with Rattle-brain's disappearance, and asked some sharp questions concerning the character of the country through which he had undertaken to penetrate. The old man and the boy went on eating in silence; the four women looked at each other, and then the eldest answered, vaguely, that they knewed nothing about it, adding, generally, that it was risky for strangers to git lost in these mountains, as they might break their necks over the high rocks. Hoping to get something more satisfactory by catechizing Peggy, I found she had disappeared, and I saw no more of her that night.

Being intensely wearied, I at length gave up and went to bed, resolving that if Dick had not reported by morning I would engage Tom Mullinx, or some active woodman acquainted with the country, to assist me in the search for him.

After a sound and refreshing sleep I awoke at the dawn, and on going out saw Peggy romping over the green with the pet deer. Peggy was not a beauty by any means—snub-nosed, sandy-haired, freckled, and slipshod; yet she was the best-looking creature on the place except the fawns; and this morning she appeared unusually well washed and smiling.

She approached me promptly, but with a somewhat furtive air. "I reckon, mister,





OLD TETERS.

ye'll be a-huntin' after yer friend this mornin', ye will, ah?"

Of course I would persevere until I found him, dead or alive; and then I commenced explaining to her my proposed plan of action. Ignoring my speech, she whispered, earnestly, "Ye'd better look down the stream for him—mind ye, down the stream;" and then whisked off to continue her romp with the deer.

Turning, I saw old Teters in the door, and ordered my horses to be saddled immediately.

"You're younger than I am," he said, "and the wimmen is busy, so you better git 'em yourself."

I didn't stand on ceremony, but handing over what I thought would be a fair return in money for the entertainment I had received, I saddled my horses and rode off.

On reaching the main horse-path I hesitated whether to turn to the right or left, and involuntarily looking back to the house, observed Peggy standing there watching me earnestly. As soon as she saw me look up she waved her hand thrice down stream, and then ran into the house.

I could not suppose that she had any knowledge of the wanderer's whereabouts; yet to a mind in doubt a feather is sufficient to turn the balance, and I accordingly took the left-hand road, leading down the stream.

After proceeding three or four miles, Dick's horse, which was following, suddenly checked up, and turning aside into the thicket, neighed like a clarion. The call was answered by a human voice which I joyfully recognized. The next moment a haggard figure came staggering out from the wood. Hatless, clothes torn in shreds and soaked with water, disheveled, pale, and bleeding from various scrapes and abrasions, there was the gallant Richard Rattlebrain, quenched and subdued to a point that I had never seen before.

"Great thunder! Larry Laureate, I

wouldn't have missed you for ten thousand dollars!"

Seeing him safe and comparatively sound, all other feelings were swallowed up in indignation.

"You graceless puppy, you deserve worse than you have got for the trouble and anxiety you have occasioned. I've a mind to dismount and club you."

"Very well," said Dick, meekly; "now's your chance to do it with impunity; but, in the name of charity, have you any thing to eat or drink about you?"

I had had no breakfast myself, but on raking my pockets and saddle-bags I found about a pint of cracker and cheese crumbs, which he devoured with famishing eagerness. I then got out my flask, in which I usually carried a limited supply of aguardiente for an emergency; and whatever the overfed and guzzling denizens of cities may think of the habit, I maintain that it is a more useful companion on a mountain tour or a frontier march than a box of quack pills. But why undertake to defend an empty idea? The flask was dry.

Dick grasped it thirstily, applying it first to his lips and then his nostrils, declaring he was refreshed even by a smell. Then scrambling into his saddle, he inquired, confidentially, "Well, what did she say about it?"

"What did who say about what?" I responded, in undisguised astonishment.

"No matter; it will do some other time; but I suppose you were not observing." And Dick's countenance fell, and he said, with a shudder, "Larry Laureate, let's hurry on to White's and get something to eat, and then—"

"And then," said I, with a severe air, "you'll be in condition to give some reasonable account of your conduct since yesterday."

"Thunder!" said he; "if I dared— But let us get out of this country first, and then I'll tell you a story that will make a good chapter in your next novel."



PEGGY.

THE MOUNTAINS.—VII.  
ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



DICK.

RIDING rapidly as the character of the road would admit, Rattlebrain and myself arrived at Soldier White's about mid-day. Entertaining no real apprehensions for Dick's safety, and attributing his absence rather to a freak of temper than to any serious misadventure, Mr. Meadows and the ladies had started homeward after an early breakfast. Our companions had accompanied them to the top of the mountain, leaving word they would return by noon.

I felt deserted and nettled, and Dick consoled himself by eating an enormous meal and then going to sleep. His material wants had to be satisfied before he could take time to indulge in any sentimental luxuries.

By the time this was accomplished our comrades returned from the mountain-top, bringing polite and apologetic messages, which ought to have satisfied the most exacting. As they rode down from the tunnel yesterday Dick's freak, as they called it, was treated lightly, and excited rather resentment than apprehension. My absence was

regretted in a very flattering manner, according to all accounts, but my motives for staying behind were duly appreciated and commended. I was too generous and self-sacrificing. "Certainly," was my mental comment, "and got my usual reward."

Dick had been so jaded and famished when I met him, and at the same time, contrary to his usual habit, so mysterious and unwilling to talk, that I had not pressed him to give an account of his absence, preferring to wait until he had refreshed and recovered himself. The mystification I had myself experienced on two occasions had made an impression upon me of the most sinister character, and led me to expect his revelations with intense curiosity.

I had exhibited the wolf's scalp to my friends, and given a fair account of my recent adventures, without, however, making any allusion to what might appear supernatural or inexplicable, and which, after all, was so vague that it might be nothing more than a trick of my own excited imagination—a conclusion which I was sometimes half



inclined myself to adopt—and hence did not care to confide my weakness to so materialistic a philosopher as the major. For his part, he was in high feather, and too much engrossed with the recent visit of our fair friends to exhibit any especial interest in my secrets. That visit, he averred, was an episode in itself worth all our journey put together. It was a peculiarly brilliant conception, worthy of Rhoda, and no one else.

"And the surprise, major, was planned and executed in a manner worthy the admiration of a soldier."

"No more of that, an thou lovest me, Laureate. But did you observe with what graceful and generous tact, after having captured us—you and I and all of us—she permitted us to march out with colors flying and all honors? Ah, it was charming!"

By supper-time Dick was afoot again, complaining of pains and bruises and stiffness in his limbs, and desiring something more to eat. He got it, and seemed to enjoy it as much as he did his dinner.

Then we lit our smokers, and I formally demanded of Mr. Rattlebrain that he should give a detailed account of his adventures, and a sufficient reason for his absence the previous night.

His scarified countenance at once assumed a troubled air, and lowering his voice, he asked, "Are we all to ourselves here? none present but our own party—no eavesdroppers?"

To make sure, he visited each door and window, closing them consecutively; then looked under the table and up the chimney. The scrutiny being apparently satisfactory, "What I am going to tell you," said Dick, with a solemnity so unnatural in him that it appeared ludicrous—"what I am going to tell you you must swear never to reveal."

"Swear!" groaned the major, imitating the ghost in *Hamlet*.

Dick started. "Gentlemen, you may be disposed to treat this as a joke, and possibly discredit what I have to say. If so, I'll take a toddy, and keep my counsel."

"Come," said the major, in a coaxing tone, and passing his flask; "take it raw, and give us your story. And as to secrecy, we'll all swear like the army in Flanders."

"Certainly," we responded, "it shall be sacred as— Do begin."

"Well," said the speaker, handing back the flask, and nodding his thanks to the proprietor, "you remember at the tunnel some words passed between Miss Prue and myself which piqued me a little. We had been cutting at each other all the way as we rode up."

"A lively way some folks have of doing their courting."

"Well, no matter about that," said Dick. "I thought she was a little rough, you see—unjustifiably so—and I got miffed, and want-

ed to do something desperate. As a gentleman, you know, can't answer a lady freely, but must fence with gloves and tipped foils—but that's nothing to the purpose. I found it essential to do something foolish, and thought I would just leave the party and run over that ridge through which Gandy perforates, and meet you all on the lower side.

"Well, going up over rocks and through tangled laurel I found no child's work, and was heartily tired of it, I assure you, before I got quite out of hearing. And then as I got through the worst of the laurel, and the ground, or rather the rocks, lay more on a level, I began to feel awfully lonesome. I don't know what came over me, but if I hadn't been ashamed I'd have turned back. And then I thought I might as well push on, and I would probably meet you all sooner by so doing. Still, as I wandered on, the woods grew more and more lonesome, and I finally began to imagine I heard voices, I couldn't tell where; but sitting down on a rock to listen, I thought it might be a sound of water deep down under-ground—a strange sort of moaning and whispering. While sitting there, about half scared, I heard the crack of a rifle, it may be half a mile off, and that rather encouraged me; so I started toward the sound."

"It was my shot when I killed the wolf," said I.

"Well, I thought it might be one of our party, and hurried up; but I presently saw the figure of a man moving like a shadow through the wood."

I started and turned pale. "Describe it, Dick; describe it!"

"I can't," said he, "it was so vague; but it certainly was not one of our party, for I hailed it, and it disappeared. It may have been one of these mountaineers, as it seemed to be carrying a gun on its shoulder; but I assure you the sight affected me strangely. However, I pushed on, thinking the fellow, whoever he was, had missed his shot, and was too sulky to answer. Anon I thought I heard voices again, and smelled smoke, as if some one had built a fire in the woods; but the smoke seemed to come up from the ground, between the crevices of the rocks. I still hurried on, in considerable trepidation, not thinking of my steps, when suddenly I fell into an opening so deep down that I was stunned, with only consciousness enough left to understand that I was hurt and in utter darkness. As I recovered somewhat, and began to feel about me, I perceived I was lying on a bed of boulders, damp and slimy, and above I could see a dim greenish spot, which was doubtless the opening through which I fell. As far as I could judge, it would have been about as easy to reach the moon as that opening to the upper earth. Below all seemed black



and cavernous. I could now distinctly hear the gurgling of water, but how deep down it was impossible to calculate. Gentlemen," said Dick, shaking his head ruefully, and motioning to the major for his flask—"gentlemen, it was about the loneliest fix I was ever in, and I'd freely have given a hundred thousand dollars—"

"If you'd had it, Dick."

"Oh, well, that's no matter; but, you see, as I lay there thinking, it seemed hours and hours, so full was my mind of awful thoughts. After a while there appeared to be other sounds coming up from below besides that of running water, and I fancied I heard an oath, which had a comfortable and encouraging effect—sociable like, you see, for it suggested the neighborhood of friends."

"One of your most intimate friends, perhaps," said the major.

"Gentlemen," said Dick, in a resentful tone, "it was no joke to me. Well, in a short time it seemed as if the blackness below began to grow red and redder, until, to my great joy, I distinctly saw fire-light, and felt the warm current of air rising around me. I could hear several voices in conversation, but the words were lost in the hollow, rumbling reverberations of an extensive cavern."

"By the light, dim as it was, I picked my way downward from rock to rock until I could see a group of human figures around a heap of blazing drift-wood. Several were costumed like our ordinary mountaineers, and armed with rifles and knives, but the chief spokesman had more the air of a lowland cattle-dealer. They were talking earnestly, and from their gestures and movements I imagined they were dividing money, or something of that sort. I had at first hailed the presence of my fellow-beings joyfully as a means of deliverance, but now began to doubt whether I might not be on the point of jumping from the frying-pan into the fire; yet the worst that could befall me at the hands of ruffians was preferable to a slow death in that damp, lonesome, shuddering hole. So I made up my mind at once to descend and take the chances. My purpose was arrested by the entrance of another figure on the scene, which, as it emerged from the darkness, reminded me of that same weird shadow I had seen in the woods."

"Was it the devil?" I exclaimed, involuntarily.



SUBTERRANEAN.

"I've no personal acquaintance with that gentleman," retorted Dick, dryly; "but it struck me as having some resemblance to that fellow Mullinx, that we called to see, you remember. His clothes were dripping as if he had recently waded through water, and I then felt assured we were in the tunnel of Gandy, and that these fellows were the counterfeiters and robbers we had heard rumors of. I now more than ever hesitated about trusting myself among them; but while stretching forward to catch a view of the new-comer's face, an accident decided the question for me, for I slipped from my perch and fell heavily, a distance of fifteen or twenty feet, to the floor of the cavern. Fortunately I was not hurt, for the spot where I lighted was of soft mud, in which I was nearly imbedded. At the noise of my fall the voices suddenly ceased, the group scattered, and the supposed leader, taking up a flaming brand, approached the spot where I lay. Nothing now remained to me but to put the best face on matters; so struggling out of my pasty bed, I advanced to meet the torch-bearer, and saluting him



cheerily, expressed profound pleasure at meeting with companionship and assistance in this frightful subterranean. A volley of blasphemies and a handling of arms were the response to my civil address. Back in the shadow I heard the click of a gun-lock and a voice exclaiming, 'Hit's one of them durned meddling fools that killed my wolf, hit is.'

"'Ho! none of that, man—stop him!' cried several voices; and the rifleman, with scowling eye, was thrust back into the darkness.

"The torch-bearer collared me and led me, bedraggled and shivering, into the midst of the group around the fire, most of whom pulled down their flapping beavers or turned their faces from the light. The chief spokesman, in a rough and menacing tone, then demanded the explanation of my appearance among them. I responded meekly, and with as much coolness as I could assume, assuring him that I had not intruded upon them voluntarily, giving him a brief sketch of my attempt to cross the ridge, and my fall into the opening which led to the cavern. He replied, savagely, that my folly would bring me to grief, as I deserved; and then, taking a deer-skin thong from one of his fellows, proceeded to tie my hands behind me. This done, I was ordered to seat myself quietly by the fire, while the company retired some distance toward the water and consulted together in an under-tone. Twice during the time the leader returned and cross-questioned me closely on the character and motives of our party in seeking the Dry Fork Valley, and especially why we hung about there so persistently, with nothing better to do than hook and eat a few dozen silly trout. Mere sport! that didn't sound reasonable; but we had ladies with us—yes, that looked peaceful enough.

"At length he departed with his gang. I heard their retreating footsteps, first crunching over loose gravel, then plashing into the water, half dreading and half hoping that I had been left alone. In a few moments, however, a brawny, six-foot ruffian returned into the circle of light, who, after parading the pistols in his belt, lit his pipe, and, seating himself on a stone opposite me, proceeded to comfort himself therewith. The fellow's nonchalant attitude and occupation had likewise a soothing effect on my nerves, and I was emboldened to request a bite of something to eat, and a whiff or so from his pipe when he got through. The only answer I got was in rather impressive pantomime; raising his bronzed and sinewy forefinger, he first tapped his compressed lips, then the butt of a pistol, and thirdly his forehead. The triple hint was conclusive, and I hazarded no more remarks; but feeling exhausted and dizzy, I tried the next best thing I could think of, and composed myself to sleep. The fire was comfortable,

and I fell into a doze—perhaps, indeed, I slept profoundly, for I remember nothing until I was aroused by a shake, and on opening my eyes saw a woman bending over me. Her face was partially hid by a veil of matted hair and the flap of a bedraggled handkerchief; at the same time the fire was burning so low that I had no opportunity of recognizing her, if perchance I had ever seen her before. She smelled confoundedly of apple-brandy, however, and was also intent on silence and mystery. Ere I could utter an exclamation she stopped my mouth with one hand and pointed significantly with the other toward the spot where I had last seen the sentinel. I missed the dragon from his post, but heard a regular and heavy snoring a little way off, which accounted for him quite satisfactorily. Then for further explanation my dumb angel exhibited a quart bottle nearly emptied. The situation was transparent enough, and I made an abortive effort to snatch the bottle from her hand. This drew her attention to my bonds, which were speedily unloosed, and then I rubbed my benumbed wrists with the brandy that I didn't swallow. Oh, friends, you can't imagine the good it did me!"

"Your wrists, or your stomach?" asked the major.

"My soul!" said Dick, looking scornfully at the materialist. "From that moment I felt free as air and brave as a lion, ready to cut the ruffian sentinel's throat, and marry my savior on the spot."

"Wasn't the girl Peg Teters?" I inquired, with earnest curiosity.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed Dick. "She was no more like that little freckled, frizzled hussy than I am like the major there."

A general laugh at the major's expense.

"Go on," said the veteran, gruffly. "You are not saved yet, and I hope the girl will have a chance to do better."

"To be sure," continued the narrator; "the worst is to come; and that part of my story which is most incredible—"

"Bad grammar, Dick: all your stories are of the third degree of comparison, and double superlatives are inelegant."

"Well," cried Dick, "you can best understand, major, how that drink helped me; and fortunate it was I got it, for I presently swallowed water enough to dilute a gallon of aqua fortis."

"The situation being explained in dumb-show as described, my girl took me by the hand and moved stealthily in the direction of the stream. Her hand wasn't soft, mind you, like those of our ladies, but the touch of any woman's hand is warm and persuasive; so I followed like a lamb, without a word, but secretly agitated with hope and wonder. We picked our way quietly among the damp stones, the light growing less and

less, until at length we reached the margin of a considerable pool of water, which seemed to fill the vaulted passage from wall to wall, and as far as the eye could reach. In she went without hesitation, deeper and deeper, darker and darker, I following as resolutely, until the water reached nearly to my guide's shoulders, and we could see our passage barred by a wall of massive rock. Then she paused and cast a cautious glance back through the long black archway to where the distant glimmer of the fire was still visible. All was satisfactory in that

direction. Then, looking forward at the rocky curtain, she made a sweeping gesture with her raised hand, first downward and then upward, which I understood to signify a deep dive under something, to come up again somewhere, but where that was to be I could not imagine; and now even the apple-jack began to grow chilly within me; but you know, boys, with a woman to lead, I couldn't back out. So down she ducked, and I after her with a will. My head presently struck a rock, which stunned me and broke our hand-hold; but with a wild clutch I caught one of her legs, which answered better, and she dragged me rapidly through a rugged passage against a strong, fresh current, butting and scraping like a Dutchman undergoing a keelhauling. Nearly suffocated, I gripped like a drowning man, and must certainly have left blue marks on the girl's ankle. Just as I felt my consciousness departing we bobbed up into fresh air. O blessed Heaven! I never knew the value of air before I got that gulp. Into the air, indeed, but in darkness so dense that for a moment respiration seemed to be the only living sense.

"But touch and hearing were quickly awakened, as I felt a firm, warm grasp of the hand, and voice half whispering, 'Now, my boy, ye're safe; so just push forward boldly, minding always to feel the current agin yer legs, and to hold out a hand to guard yer face agin the rocks.'

"'Bless you, my angel,' I exclaimed, 'you have saved my life;' and in my enthusiastic gratitude I believe I tried to kiss my heroic guide."

"And didn't you succeed, Dick?"

"No; I only got my mouth full of wet hair and a smart snub on my nose, as she said, 'Don't be a durned fool now, but do as I bid ye, and try to git out of this.' This wasn't angelic language, indeed, but she was certainly a noble-spirited girl, and I felt that I owed her my life.

VOL. XLVI.—No. 275.—43



THE FLIGHT.

"But to hasten the conclusion of a long story, we waded on together, groping, stumbling, and butting heads, until I was ready to faint from exhaustion. My guide halted occasionally to feel for the current, which was our sole reliance to indicate direction, and this sometimes was so slow and uncertain that we unconsciously doubled, and on reaching a ripple were shocked to find ourselves traveling down stream. But, with perseverance and the guide's fine instinct, we retrieved all errors, and at length I shivered with a whiff of chilling air.

"'There it is,' she whispered, joyfully; 'we're well-nigh out.'

"A short time after we emerged beneath the rocky archway into the hawthorn glade of the upper entrance of Gandy; and if there could be any doubt of the locality, here's a white handkerchief I found upon the sward;" and here the *improvisatore* exhibited a fine cambric handkerchief, embroidered at the corners, and marked in the centre with the worked initials R. D.

"Give it to me," exclaimed the major, with ill-concealed eagerness.

"Not for a hundred thousand," quoth Dick.

"Please permit me to examine it, Richard, my boy."

"You, Mr. Laureate, may touch the initials with your lips if you wish; I'll trust you that far," replied Dick, extending his trophy toward me.

But for the major's jealous eye I might perhaps have accepted the permission, but, under the circumstances, declined.

"The same privilege to you, major, for a tip of your brandy flask."

"Get out!" growled the veteran, gruffly.

"Certainly," continued Dick; "I have already got out. Heavens! how bright and glorious the stars looked, and how free, tired, and hungry I felt!"

"And how grateful to your friend Peggy for her devotion!" malevolently added the major.





"HE KILLED MY WOLF."

"It was not worth while to repeat that," replied Dick, "for I'm willing to swear it was not her: nor does it seem likely that my curiosity on that head will ever be gratified, for no sooner had we struck the trail that leads out of the upper glade than I turned to express my obligations in form, and determined at the same time to learn her name. Eluding my grasp, she whispered, 'Now, mister, this is no time for fooling; there's the trail that leads to Soldier White's, and if ye've got sense enough to foller it ye're all safe, and I advise ye hereafter to stick close to yer company.' So saying, she vanished among the laurels.

"I followed the road, staggering from exhaustion, until daylight, when I hid in a thicket and tried to sleep. I was too much fevered with fatigue to sleep, but lay there resting until I heard your horse's hoofs, and recognized the salutation of my faithful steed. You know the rest, Mr. Laureate."

"And that's the conclusion of your story, is it, Master Dick?" asked the major, as he rose with a yawn and looked at his watch. "Well, my candid opinion is, you were drunk yesterday afternoon, slept somewhere in the woods, and dreamed all that. You haven't the talent to have invented such a 'dime novel' in your waking hours."

Dick slapped back, as usual, but was too much used up to make a decided fight, and so we all went to bed.

For my own part, I must acknowledge

that the story in some points so far coincided with my own mysterious experiences that I determined to question Dick privately before forming my conclusions.

On the following morning, as had been agreed, we took leave of Soldier White's, and started down the Dry Fork to visit Roy, who lived at the mouth of Red Creek, and to seek such other sports and adventures as the country afforded. As we passed the mill we recognized several acquaintances among a group of mountaineers, and stopped to exchange civilities and take leave. The major politely offered his flask and drinking cup, which, notwithstanding the early hour, was honored duly as it passed from hand to hand, with "Well, here's good luck, men." My quondam antagonist, Tom Mullinx, however, put aside the cup with a scowl, and, to the surprise of every body, retired sullenly into the mill. The bear-

skin I had won of him was thrown over my saddle, and it occurred to me that the sight of this trophy had again recalled the mortification of the shooting-match. Anxious to leave good feeling behind us, I asked Jesse Hetterick to bring Tom out, that we might drink and shake hands like men burying all animosities before we parted.

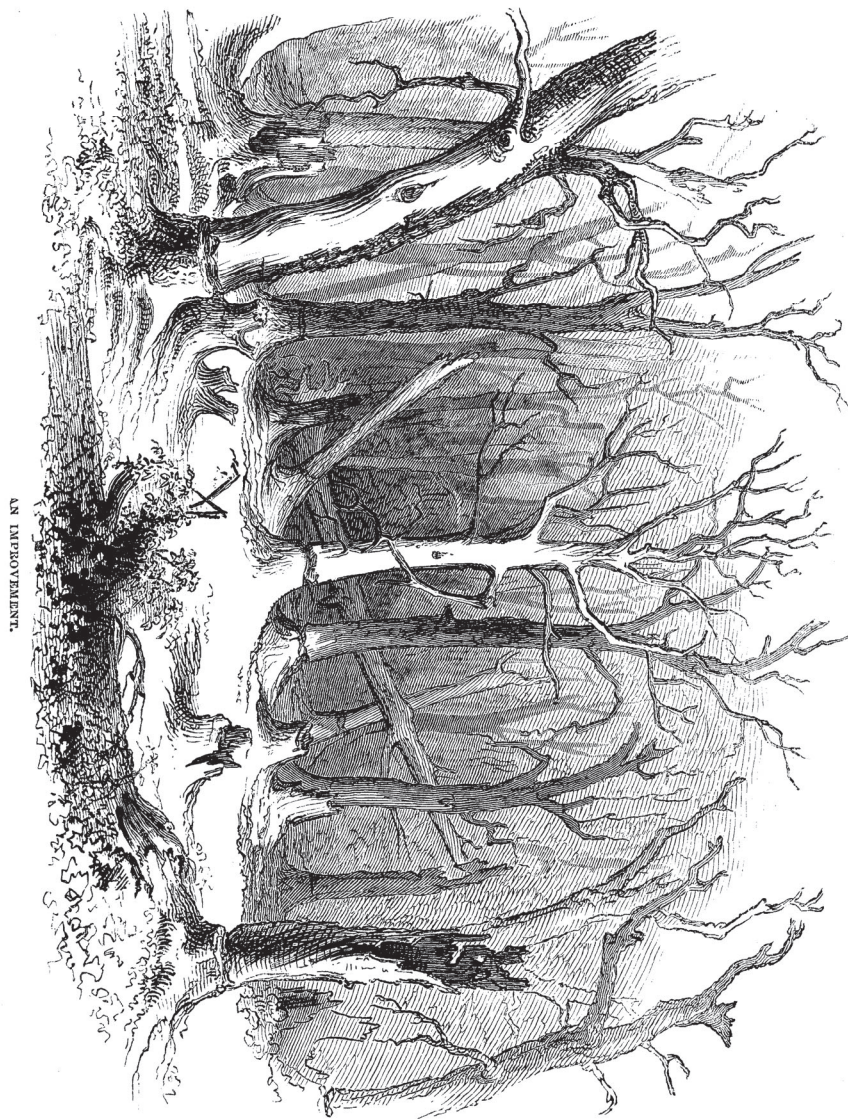
Jesse laughed at the suggestion of the shooting-match, and then looked grave.

"Hit's not that he minds; sure Tom's got too much sense for that; but he's mighty riled about somebody a-killin' of his wolf, and he 'lows hit was one of you men as done hit, and he swears vengeance agin ye, he does."

At the mention of the wolf I was electrified, and drawing Jesse aside, asked him earnestly if Tom had lost a pet wolf lately.

"Well, not exactly that," he replied, "but ye see Tom makes his living pretty much by huntin', and there's a middlin' high bounty on wolf scalps; and so, ye see, when he finds out where an old she has a den, instead of killin' of her he plays sharp, and waits till she has young uns, and as they begin to come out and play around he kills them off and gits the premium on five or six scalps every season. So ye see when a feller finds the haunt of an old wolf he lays claim to her, and takes care of her, and she fetches him a smart little income every year; and for any body to go and kill another man's wolf is a big spite, and a fightin' business,





AN IMPROVEMENT.

it is. And somebody killed Tom's wolf up here by the tunnel day before yesterday, they did; and he's dangerous mad about it, so he is."

"And who does he blame?" I asked, in breathless curiosity.

"Well," said Jesse, "he lays it on that young feller there—Mr. Rattlebrain; but he says he hain't sure of it quite, or else there would 'a been trouble."

Now here were revelations and explanations and personal responsibilities which admitted of no shirking or hesitation.

Taking Jesse by the arm, I entered the

mill, and cornered Mullinx so that he had to stand up and look me square in the face.

"Mullinx," I said, "somebody killed your wolf, I understand."

"Yes, they did," he replied, grimly; "and they took her scalp, too, the sneaking hounds, which is jest about equal to highway robbery; and, darn him, I—I—"

"Well, suppose the man who did it will tell you he meant no wrong, not being aware of your claim on the animal, and will give you up the scalp, and a fair reimbursement for any further loss you may sustain in the matter?"





THE OLD DRAGON.

"Well, mister," said Tom, "that would look as if the feller meant fair; and if he does that I'd bear him no grudge, I wouldn't."

I then handed Mullinx the scalp, and put ten dollars into his hand, and ere he fairly recovered from his astonishment we mounted and rode off.

This interview had rather relieved my mind in regard to those mysterious appearances in the forest, and on cross-questioning Dick during the day he fell into so many contradictions and discrepancies that I concluded, with the major, that the story of his subterranean adventures, like those of the pious Æneas or Dante Alighieri, might be properly classed among the works of imagination. In further testimony whereof it was remarked that the author became unusually and excessively sensitive concerning his reputation for veracity, and never thereafter voluntarily alluded to the subject.

The road down the Fork is only an extension of the horse and cattle paths we have described so frequently, coasting the stream closely, and crossing its rocky bed about four times in a mile on an average.

As we descend, the cabin-crowned clearings are fewer and farther between, the valley narrower, and the mountain ram-parts higher and more inaccessible. If there are any especial scenic beauties on the route, they are hidden by the overshadowing forests. The bed of Dry Fork grows wider as we progress, and the tributary pools deeper and more extensive. The size of the trout is said to increase in proportion, but having our point to make, we did not tarry to try them.

Toward the middle of the afternoon we reached a clearing of considerable extent, on the further side of which stood a cabin and its out-buildings, reminding one of a sow and pigs. The day had been uncommonly sultry, men and horses were both jaded and hungry, and with one consent we concluded to stop for the night.

Savage and lonely as are these vast tracts of primitive forest, there is yet a virgin freshness in their shade, a variety and affluence of natural life which relieves their monotony and charms away their solitude. But on issuing from the pillared aisles and verdant archways of nature's temples into a mountain *improvement* one feels as if approaching the lair of some obscure and horrible dragon. Death, desolation, and decay are visible on every hand. Skeleton forests, leafless, lifeless, weather-beaten, and fire-blasted; heaps of withered branches; split rail fences, warped and rotten; barns and out-buildings bare-ribbed, and grizzled with premature decay; wretched frames of domestic animals covered with moth-eaten hides, and strolling about like lifeless automatons; a dwelling dingy, contorted, and dilapidated, in the midst of a space from whence every green thing and graceful form has been banished.

Leaning against the door-jamb is a squalid old man, mute and motionless as a statue of stupidity, his glassy eye apparently fixed upon a dead pig lying just in front of the

door. The body of the deceased animal was puffed up with putrescence, and tainted the air for a quarter of a mile round.

This was the patriarchal waster in the midst of his life's labors—the violator of nature's virgin beauties, the remorseless murderer of her forest kings, whose daily sacrifices reeked with sap and crackled with the growth of centuries.

"The blessings of society follow the man who has made two blades of grass grow where one grew before; but this man never knew the gentle joy of planting, or the hopeful pleasure of cultivating; his whole life has been spent in killing, killing, killing, and now too old perhaps to wield an axe, the ancient ogre stands there gloating over the scathed limbs and prostrate bodies of his natural enemies, complacently contemplating this sylvan Golgotha which he calls '*an improvement*.'"

"Certainly," said the major, smiling at the conclusion of my tirade, "he is doubtless incapable of a feeling of remorse for his imputed crimes, as he appears to be unconscious of villainous smells. I'll warrant you now he is rather congratulating himself on the results of a hard-working, self-denying life; triumphantly summing up the number of acres he has cleared of these pestiferous trees; rejoicing in the popular respect accorded to his former prowess with the axe, and present ownership of extensive deadenings. He is, in brief, a representative man among a people who now consider the 'destruction of timber' one of the primary duties and leading virtues of our race; but he who has traveled in older countries, and has seen the actual results of this savage wasting, may hope to see the day when the poet's views on this subject will control both politician and people."

Our civil salutations were scarcely noticed by the old man at the door, and not until we dismounted and demanded hospitality in a rather authoritative manner did he deign to refer us to "the women."

The major espied a freckled-faced boy, whom he ordered to feed and rub the horses, accompanying him to the stable to see it well done. Rattlebrain and myself found the women in a shed behind the house. Two thoroughly matured dames were swashing dirty soap-suds in a tub, and exhibiting the family wardrobe on adjacent fences and lines of grape-vine. A third figure, got up to resemble a magnificent Shanghai fowl, was splashing buttermilk from a churn, to the great delight of a cat and kittens, a pet pig, and a pair of hound pups. The elders acquiesced in our request for entertainment but churlishly, as if they couldn't help it; and when Dick displayed a bunch of squirrels we had killed by the way, he was told he would have to clean them himself, as they

had no water handy, and the spring they used was half a mile off.

"From the looks of things," retorted Dick, glancing significantly around, "I should have guessed it was a mile off, at least."

At this the girl at the churn giggled under her bonnet, and my observant companion remarked that her plump arms and legs were so white that the buttermilk didn't spot them.

On returning to the front porch we found the major rating the proprietor in a high tone concerning the condition of his front premises.

"Well, the pig had only been lying there since last night. He didn't know what it died of. It was the hot sun that swelled it up; and as it didn't trouble him, he didn't care."

"Ah, I beg pardon!" exclaimed the major, swelling with disgust. "The pig and the hot sun are the parties responsible for this abominable state of things. And what am I to think of you who sit here all day and tolerate it?"

The dame here came to the rescue with a flank attack, intimating in a sharp tone that folks who were so oversqueamish had better stay at home. If we were not willing to take things as we found 'em at their house, they didn't hanker after our company, they didn't. There was some force in these observations, and I quietly bribed freckled "Bub" with a silver quarter to drag the nuisance away and bury it, which he did at once, and every thing grew sweet again.

By this time supper was ready, and we were invited to sit up with the family. The feast consisted of very sharp and bitter buttermilk, served in tin cups, coarse corn pone, and our squirrels, swimming in a sauce of grease and water. We did our best to convince the cranky dame that we were not amenable to the charge of squeamishness, and went into it pell-mell, even to snatching and scrambling with our hosts for the giblets of parboiled squirrel in the greasy dish.

As candles and kerosene lamps are reckoned among the superfluities in these parts, we lit our cigars and pipes, and retired to the starlight of the front porch. Then bed-time was announced, and being ushered into the proprietor's chamber, a single bed of moderate dimensions was assigned for the accommodation of our party. We could arrange it to suit our convenience. "As thick as three in a bed" has become a by-word. Four in a bed surpasses the limits of proverbial philosophy; and being naturally addicted to seclusion, I yielded my share of the couch and took the floor, with a saddle for my pillow and a blanket for covering.

Sleep, like a loving lass, needed but brief wooing. Except in romances, virtue is not always rewarded, and, in spite of doctors' promises, fresh air, exercise, and a temperate





BUB.

supper will not insure the coveted repose. Mine was interrupted by nightmare dreams of creeping through subterranean passages to escape from robbers, and finally plunging head-foremost into an abyss of mud, where I stuck, panting and suffocating. In my struggles I awoke, to realize the peculiar sensations which doubtless had suggested the dreams, and which filled me with real alarm. There was a rumbling in my ear like the buzzing of a spinning-wheel. My head and face were so hot and oppressively heavy that I could not rise from the saddle. Disengaging one hand from the blanket I felt the upper side of my face and head covered with a squirming mass of soft, warm fur, which upon further exploration developed into five kittens, cuddled in a loving heap, and purring with contentment. I was far from satisfied with the arrangement, and especially aggravated at having my rest disturbed, so I rose suddenly to a sitting posture, unceremoniously tumbling the happy family out of their bed. They clung together, mewing and striving to climb back to their comfortable position. In my wrath I seized one by the back of the neck, and slung it vindictively at the bed occupied by the ancient couple. Considering the darkness, my aim was good, and the miauling missile struck the pillow with a rip which stopped the old man's snoring.

"Scat! scat! Wife, here's one of these durned kittens jumped on the bed."

"Well, fling it out, can't ye!" she muttered, impatiently.

Having found it in his fumbling, he dropped the animal quietly on the floor, whence it quietly trotted back to its fellows on my blanket.

Meanwhile I directed another toward the same point.

"Scat! scat!" cried a shriller voice. "You old fool, ye've flung the nasty critter right into me face, ye hev now!" and giving the kitten a spiteful toss, she sent it over to the bed where my three comrades lay. I heard a stifled snickering in that quarter, and presently the shot was returned, flying with outspread claws, and tearing as it ricocheted across the coverlet. Then, as the wrathful dame rose to grope for the offender, I let fly a plumper which carried away her night-cap.

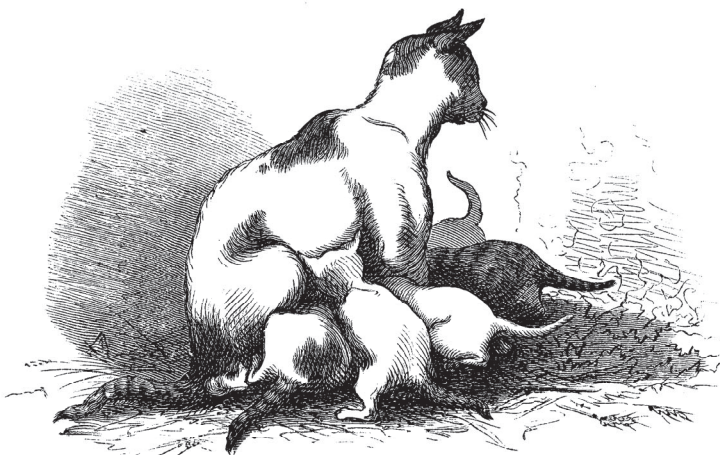
By this time there was a general tumult of scating, miauling, pounding on the wall, and calling for lights. As the patriarch got up to unbar the door I pitched the rest of my ammunition on his back, where the little wretches clung with all their claws.

"Wife! wife!" he exclaimed, as he danced and stumbled around the room, "I believe the devil himself is got among these cats. Take 'em off—scat!—take 'em off."

This suggestion of the presence of the Evil One aroused the dame's superstitious fears, and redoubled her calls for Betsey and a light, declaring she wouldn't touch one of the creatures to save the old man's life.

The door was at length unbarred, and the virgin of the churn came to the rescue with a torch of fat pine. The light revealed the stranger guests all sleeping the sleep of untroubled consciences, and the five tempest-tossed kittens wandering around mewing in concert.

"Them's all our cat's kittens," said Buttermilk Betsey; "all white and tortoiseshell, the pretty little dears."



DOMESTIC BLISS.

"Hain't there a big black cat somewhere round?" asked the old woman, in a tremulous voice.

The favorite mask of the Arch Enemy was nowhere to be seen.

"Take 'em out! take 'em out!" growled the patriarch; "the devilish things hev well-nigh scratched the shirt off me back."

Betsey smiled audibly. "Well, daddy, ye're always a-cravin' of somebody to scratch yer back, and maybe hit's done ye good, hain't it?"

"Git out with you and yer cussed cats," cried daddy. "I'll drown the whole misbegotten litter to-morrow, so I will."

At this direful threat Betsey snatched up her pets, and smothering her youthful felines in her apron, went out with her light, and there was peace until morning.

At sunrise the door opened again, and a pleasant manly voice called out, "Men, git up and rinse yer countenances; folks is a-goin' to set up!"

On rising we recognized in the new-comer our quondam acquaintance of the cooking scene on Gandy—the very man we were going to visit.

Washington Roy was a son of our host the patriarch, and to all appearance a decided improvement on his progenitor. His presence had so far improved our footing with the family that breakfast went off very civilly, and on observing the clawed faces of the seniors I felt a twinge of remorse for my deeds of darkness. Dick, Cockney, and Betsey, however, had got up a triangular giggle, which broke out at the slightest allusion to cats. At length the matron, with a severe and significant glance toward her junior guests, observed that she had never knowed them kittens to behave so before, and she had a suspicion there mought be wuss devils in the house than sich as come in the shape of black cats.

To change the subject, Betsey was sent for some cream and maple-sugar, with which Major Martial confected a delicious milk-punch, which made an agreeable substitute for coffee. The effort emptied the major's flask, and there wasn't a doggerly within fifty miles. What a benighted country!

"No licker for love or money, certainly," quoth the junior Roy, with a humorous wink, "least you'll agree to go round by Bill Grey's camp, where's a jug of the best, over two year old to my knowledge."

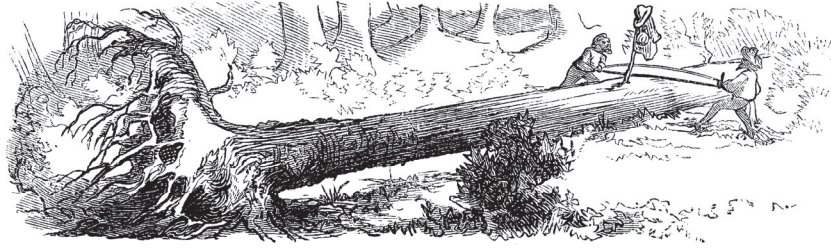
"I'd ride twenty miles over a reasonable road," quoth the major, "to get a gallon of good apple-jack just at this time."

"Hit's there, sure," replied Roy, smiling—"not more'n five mile, and middlin' good road until ye come in sight of the licker, then the road gits steep like, and hard to travel."

The veteran was eager, and declared himself ready to take a tilt with any ogre or dragon that guarded the treasure. After several more tantalizing jokes the mountaineer gave the following explanatory narrative:

"Old Bill Grey, you see, was a-gittin' out some timber to float down to the saw-mill at Horseshoe Bend. So he goes out with Flanagin, and finds a mighty fine spruce pine blowed down, with its top a-layin' up the hill like, and its roots heaved up in the air, it mought be as high as this house, with several ton of dirt and stones stickin' to 'em. So they tuck out their cross-cut saw to cut it into convenient lengths, and measured off the clean body of the tree into three eighteen-foot logs. Well, Grey 'lowed it would be more convenient to make the upper cut first, and git shut of all the limbs and brush. So jist below where they begun sawin' a little branch stuck up convenient, and they hung their coats on it and a jug of licker they had fetched along to comfort 'em. Well, they





DELUSIVE INDUSTRY.

sawed and they sweated, and every turn or so Flanagan wanted to stop and refresh, but Grey 'lowed they'd best finish their cut, and then set down and have some satisfaction. So they sawed away until they got pretty nigh through, when, to their surprise, the tree-top begun to crackle and split off of itself. Both men drapped the saw and stood back, skeered like, to see the body of the tree risin' of itself; and bein' lightened of the bushy top, and its mountain of roots weightin' it down, it never stopped until it righted entirely, and stood sixty foot straight up in the air.

"Don't that beat the deuce?" says Grey. "There's three good saw logs gone up."

"Durn the saw logs!" says Flanagan; "but don't you see our coats and jug are ascended up with 'em?"

"To be sure," says Grey. "That's about as mean as stealin'." I say, Flanagan, we've got to fell that tree to get them things, we hev—and you haven't fetched an axe."

"No," says Flanagan, who was about as thirsty as Dry Fork in summer; "but I'll run back to the camp and fetch it middlin' quick."

"While he was gone Grey sets down on the roots and considers the job, and while so a-doin' a whiff of wind blows off the coats, and leaves the jug still a-hangin' on high. When Flanagan got back with the axe, all hot and thirsty and ready to pitch in, Grey stopped him.

"I say, man, the fall of them coats has give me an idee. S'pose you cut that tree down, what becomes of the jug?"

"Flanagan's jaw fell as the idee struck him.

"Why, it smashes, of course. I say, Bill, kin you climb any?"

"Some," said Grey, lookin' up, wistful, like a dog that's treed a 'coon. "I kin, some; but a tree like that, fifteen foot around the butt, and sixty foot without a knob or limb, it would tough a fox-squirrel."

"Then they set about an hour, lookin' into each other's faces and not exchangin' a word. Finally an idee strikes Flanagan. 'Bill,' says he, 'ef I had my rifle here I could cut that limb off in about three shots, I could.'

"Maybe you mought," says Grey, scratch-

in' his head; 'and wouldn't the jug break all the same?"

"So it would," says Flanagan.

"Well, man," says Grey, 'we've lost our day's work. Let's go home.'

"Durn the day's work," says Flanagan; "I hain't troubled about that."

"An acorn falling upon the noddle of Sir Isaac Newton suggested the theory of gravitation," sighed Major Martial. "Grey and Flanagan were evidently philosophers of the Newtonian type; but nothing has ever struck their heads hard enough to suggest a plan for getting that jug down unbroken?"

"Not as I knows of," replied Roy, somewhat mystified by the philosophy.



A QUANDARY.

## THE MOUNTAINS.—VIII.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



ROY'S FAMILY.

AFTER our frugal breakfast, and a sharp wrangle with an accidental "yerb doctor" respecting the geography and position of the Blackwater River, our party again took the road, led by Washington Roy. We soon reached Red Creek, a full, dashing stream which comes pouring down from the high levels of the Alleghany, to lose itself in the Black Fork of Cheat just below. Its waters are blood-red and limpid, like fine claret, and, as our guide reported, wriggling with trout of the largest size found in these regions.

A short distance beyond we drew rein in front of a cozy cabin, where a stout dame with a flock of children sat in joyful expectancy. Dismounting, Roy gave us a general introduction by proclaiming himself proprietor of the stock and premises. Scarce two hours had elapsed since breakfast; but we must not pass his cabin without stopping to take a bite.

In view of the skimpy entertainment at our late halt, we amiably concluded not to violate the rules of mountain hospitality. So we dismounted, and stretched ourselves on the stumps and logs which stood for rustic seats on the lawn.

Roy threw a fresh stump on the fire. The dame cradled her suckling, and commenced

greasing her pans; while a detachment of tow-headed children, with a coarse hook tied to a hoop pole by a line of brown thread, started for the stream, and presently returned with a most appetizing mess of trout. This they did with an ease and celerity which excited surprise, and put to the blush our scientific sportsmen, who read Frank Forester, and go out armed with jointed rods, reels, horse-hair lines, and books of cunningly devised flies.

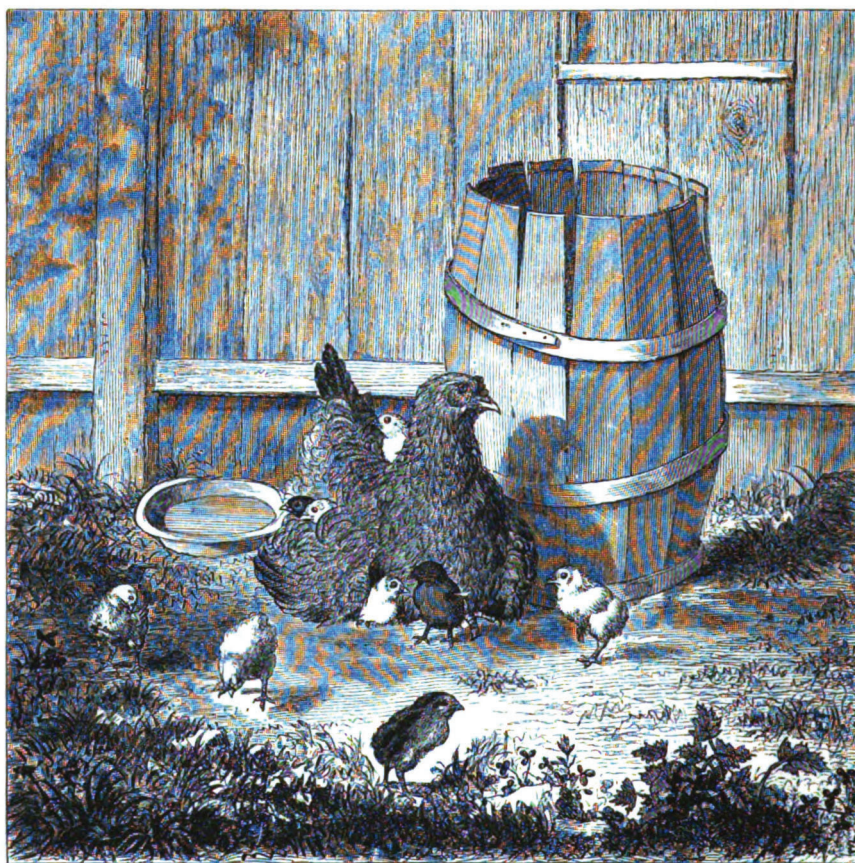
"To be sure," said the major, "it is, after all, not the thing itself, but the manner of doing it, which constitutes 'sport.'"

When dinner was served, and the fish, crisp, brown, and hot, were distributed, Dick found time to observe, between two swallows, "I wonder, major, if we would think these trout more savory if they had enjoyed the elegant advantage of being blown up the chimney from a hot stone?"

The cottagers, who were familiar with the story, all laughed heartily at this allusion.

"My romantic youth," mumbled the veteran, looking up from his plate as if he begrudged the time lost in replying, "I am pleased to perceive your subaqueous adventure with Peggy Teters has not entirely drowned your wit."





DOMESTIC LIFE AT ROY'S.

Rattlebrain winced, and flushed up fiercely. "I say, major, I won't stand that—"

At the moment Mrs. Roy emptied another pan of frizzling trout into the dish, and a drop of hot fat struck Richard on the back of the hand, which served so well as a counter-irritant that the conversation stopped, and the dinner went on.

It had been determined during the ride not to tarry at Red Creek, but to proceed at once to Fanceller's, at the mouth of Blackwater, thence to explore that stream far enough to resolve all the geographical questions suggested in the morning's discussion.

Trout were so abundant and so artlessly taken that we had lost interest in the sport, and mountaineering had become a little stale and monotonous, especially since Dick's stunning adventures; in fact, there was an unacknowledged under-current setting toward the lowlands—a secret hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt—a still more potent and mysterious attraction emanating from the electro-magnetism of silken fabrics. But while we were all evidently of the same mind, no

one dared speak it to his fellows while an unexplored nook in the wilderness remained to test our constancy and challenge our manhood. Roy himself had caught something of our spirit, and concluded to accompany us; and as soon as the lunch was ended we took the road again.

All we had yet seen of mountain travel was tame and insignificant beside this day's experiences. Our path no longer coasted the streams, but led directly across the rugged spurs jutting out from the western base of the Backbone. These suckling mountains were of gigantic proportions, and the intersecting glens deep and difficult.

He who engineered this road was evidently not a politician, and condescended to no deviations or doublings for the sake of expediency, but rather a fierce dogmatist, who went toward his destination in a bee-line, as it might have appeared on the charts; but the ups and downs were frightful, and I am sure an occasional well-considered detour on grades nearer the horizontal plane would have actually shortened the distance made



by the sharp perpendicular doublings of ridge and glen, as your man of expediency, after all, will often reach his goal in better time and temper than the narrow-minded and tyrannical slave of conscience, who, rather than turn aside, essays to leap the chasm or tunnel the precipice.

For the first two or three miles the road crept along the steep and nearly precipitous sides of a mountain overlooking the Black Fork, a narrow track barely affording footing for a horse between the thicketed wall rising on one side, and a sheer precipice of five or six hundred feet on the other, menacing destruction to man and horse as the penalty for the slightest misstep. To aggravate the danger and difficulty, a heavy rain came on; and then, to climax all, at the narrowest and steepest point we met a horseman, loaded to his eyes with a bale of carded wool. Here was a dilemma indeed, and the whole company were brought to a dead halt, to stare in each other's faces, and consider the question of life and death. There were the murky clouds above and the dark, misty river below, and here were we in mid-air, clinging to the mountain-side by a shelving and slippery bridle-path scarcely two feet wide. To turn was literally impossible; to pass was not even thought of; to dismount one must carefully slide backward over his horse's rump, or climb from the saddle upward into the bushes which fringed the upper side. Even while we stood there my cursed beast reached up to crop the leaves overhead, and in the effort threw her hind-legs partially over the precipice. A mass of earth and stones, displaced in her struggle to recover her footing, went thundering down into the dim abyss. She was barely righted when up went her nose again among the tempting leaves. The situation was rather too much for my nerves, so I reached up, and lifted myself from the unsteady seat, and by means of a gnarled tree got footing among the rocks above our path.

"My man," said the major, grimly, "I see but one way out of this. We are five to one. You must therefore dismount, and cling to the hill-side, while we throw your horse over the cliff."

"Hit does look middlin' ticklish, hit does," replied the stranger, "but I should hate to lose me critter, so I would, mister."

"What's her value in money?" asked the soldier, curtly.

"Well," said the man, in a lingering manner, "she mought be worth about sixty dollars, I reckon, but I'd hate to lose her, I would. And then she moughtn't be peaceable when you tried to throw her over, and—"

"Dismount!" said the major, sternly, leveling his rifle; "we'll soon settle that question."

Roy meanwhile had followed my example,



THE MOUNTAINEER.

and crept along the upper side until he was opposite our unhappy vis-à-vis, who at the sight of the gun had hastened to dismount, dragging his roll of wool up with him.

"Hold on a bit, major!" shouted Roy, "and maybe we can fix this business without a-killin' of the critter."

The veteran raised the muzzle of his piece, and awaited the announcement of our guide's plan.

"Neighbor," quoth Washington, "jist hook yer wool to that bush, and take yer mar' by the bridle, as I tell ye."

The mountaineer obeyed his order with hopeful alacrity. Roy then got behind and took her by the tail, and in a few moments the peaceable critter was forced back about ten paces, until opposite a little cove, or rather indentation in the upper hill-side. Here both men, creeping around the animal's fore and hind legs, planted their heads and shoulders under her belly, and actually heaved the horse four or five feet up into the niche, and held her there, leaving the path free. The major, who had been watching the proceeding with intense interest, promptly gave the order, "Forward! march, quick time!" In a minute our cavalcade (the loose horses following) had passed the point, and the stout mountaineers quietly let their burden slide back into the path. A shout of applause and gratulation burst from our party, while Roy's eye twinkled with pleasure as he observed, "Now that's what I call a middlin' cute trick, wasn't it, now?"

"Well, I'm mighty glad my critter's safe, anyhow," said the mountaineer; "and I don't begrudge a treat to show my goodwill." And with that he lugged a plethoric flask of apple-brandy from his pocket, and handed it to Roy. It passed along our line, and got a lover's kiss from every mouth, the stranger wishing us good luck on the heel-taps. Then pocketing the empty vessel, he resumed his wool-pack, mounted his critter, and went on his way rejoicing.

As we progressed our road became less dramatically dangerous, but scarcely less





UPS AND DOWNS.

difficult and vexatious. The river went curving away on its own free course, while we drove steadily straightforward, over hill and dale. Going up hill, our saddles slipped backward over the horses' rumps, and going down, rider and equipage gravitated to a position between the steed's ears. In default of breast straps and cruppers, the manes and tails of our struggling beasts were nearly deracinated in the desperate efforts of the horsemen to counteract the steepness of the ascending and descending grades.

Poor Cockney was, as usual, pre-eminent for his mishaps, and his backward and forward slips gave rise to the only mirthful passages of that gloomy and fatiguing journey. I took advantage of the general dullness to engage Roy in conversation respecting the mysteries of Gandy. He shrugged his shoulders, as if he knew more than he desired to know. They were a civil, quiet neighborhood in the main, harmed nobody that he ever heard of, and were honest and fair in their dealings as most people, but there were some queer doings up there among some of 'em, he was sure; suspicious-looking strangers often made journeys to and from

that lonesome country, and not being known cattle dealers, nobody knewed their business.

"When I first saw your party," said he, frankly, "I thought you mought be of that set, but when I see ye a-cookin' of them fish, I knowed I was mistaken."

I was rather pleased with the mountaineer's tribute to our manners and faces, and asked by what token he distinguished honest men from rogues.

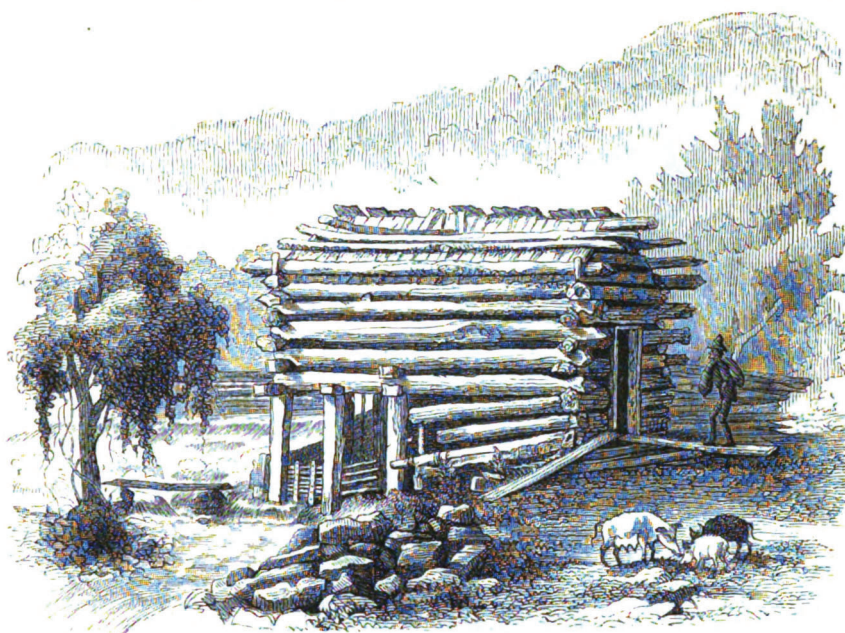
"Oh, as to that," said he, "there is no outward mark that I could ever see, but it's easy enough to tell the difference between men that's travelin' on business and them that's jist tryin' to fool away their time."

I complimented Roy on his sagacity, and relapsed into silence.

About one o'clock we halted at a blacksmith's shop, where we lunched and rested during two hours that Muleiber was occupied in reshoeing our horses and refitting our equipage generally. Then, stiffened rather than refreshed by our nooning, we sullenly remounted and pursued our sloppy way.

Late in the afternoon we called at Johnson's cabin, hoping to engage the proprietor





THE TUB MILL.

to accompany us on our projected exploration. He was not at home, and leaving word for him to report at Fanceller's early next morning, we rode on to the mouth of Blackwater, arriving in time to witness a glorious sunset, which foretold clear weather on the morrow. At the tub mill on the Blackwater we found Fanceller and Johnson together discoursing on the very subject which was uppermost in our minds. The dark red waters and headlong current of the river were unmistakable. This was, indeed, the Blackwater of our Virginia Canaan. Johnson readily engaged to accompany our party in the morning, but Fanceller warned us against the attempt in the present stage of the water. With a rugged and rapid descent the wild torrent had no margins, but rushed through a narrow gorge, bounded by precipitous rocks. In low water one might find a practicable passage over dry rocks and drift-wood, wading through occasional shallows; but now the stream occupied the whole width of its bed, and the current was irresistible.

We heard his objections, and agreed to eat and sleep on them. Fanceller's was the jolliest house we had yet visited. His wife was the ideal of a Flemish housewife; his daughter pretty enough to serve beer to a king; his little boys comely, sociable, and obliging; his table smoked with the best the country afforded, excellently cooked, and amiably served. It took us back to the times of Chaucer, when mills were the cen-

tres of social civilization, and a miller the magnate of his district.

After a good supper came good beds; ours were so comfortable that we didn't blame the fleas for congregating in them. But it requires more than one night's rest to counterbalance the fatigues of such a day as we had passed. Although the following morning was fresh and fair, we all rose more or less stiffened and complaining. We breakfasted on some fine suckers and perch, taken in the Black Fork of Cheat, and Johnson came in while we were at table. Fanceller reported that instead of falling, as we had hoped, the Blackwater had risen during the night, owing to the recent rain, and again urged us to tarry several days until the waters fell before attempting the ascent. Our guides, too, seemed to have cooled off a little, and, with our jaded spirits, the enterprise was so languidly discussed that we were upon the point of abandoning it.

"Well, gentlemen, what next?" I asked, looking consecutively into the faces of my companions.

No response was elicited, but an interchange of sheepish glances, as if each was waiting for his fellow to repeat a favorite quotation from Byron:

"Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark  
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;

"Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark  
Our coming, and look brighter when we come."

Sweet it may be, but not without honor or





FANCELLER'S YOUNGEST.

achievement; not after wasted effort, neglected opportunities, to remember unfulfilled hopes and vainglorious vaunts; not as sneaking back from the defeated enterprise, or conning over apologies for the lost battle.

"Comrades," I again asked, "can we look Moorfield in the face without having seen the Great Falls of Blackwater?"

Of course we couldn't; and in half an hour after we were grappling with the laurel. Then followed a day of the most intolerable fatigue and difficulty that any of our party had ever experienced.

As Fanceller had told us, there was no footing to be found near the river, and we were obliged to travel along the mountain-side, composed of jagged and broken rocks, from the interstices of which sprung an overhanging forest of pines, with an undergrowth of twisted rhododendrons and snaky green-brier, so dense that all movement was painful, and we were frequently constrained to creep long distances on all fours. In addition to these difficulties, the thick, mossy carpeting of the rocks slid beneath our feet, tripping us up and disclosing numerous fissures and pitfalls that opened deep down into the darkness, how deep no one could tell. The greatest circumspection was required continually to avoid falling into these holes, and many and narrow were the escapes we made on this memorable day. The heat was intense, and our superhuman exertions created a continual and tormenting thirst. Now one of the

peculiar miseries of our position was that while we could hear the gurgling and plashing of numerous brooks rushing down through the bowels of the mountain, there was no water to be found near the surface. This forced us to descend to the main stream to quench our thirst, and here, within a few yards of the edge, we could see these subterranean streamlets bursting out in pretty cascades of diamond purity and icy coldness ere they plunged into the dark red torrent. Then, dreading the fatigue of another ascent, we would endeavor to coast the river by walking along slippery and bobbing drift-logs, swinging across chasms by the aid of pendent branches, scaling precipitous buttresses of rock which directly barred our progress, ascending and descending by climbing trees and

clinging to exposed roots. This was worse than the mountain-side, so that when forced to the escalade of some projecting bluff, we would resume the upper route, until the torments of thirst again drove us down to the water-side. Thus alternating between bad and worse, we halted about mid-day upon a flat rock to dine, felicitating ourselves that we had made about five miles of our journey. Garments in shreds, faces and hands bleeding, arms and shins scratched and bruised, eyes swelled and blinking from the thrusts of sharp projecting branches, ankles twisted, and frames generally exhausted, was the condition of our party after the first morning's contest with the difficulties of the Blackwater.

Except Roy, whose tough harness and iron frame seemed as yet laurel-proof, the rest of us were ground down to a common level. The bluff major's soldierly resolution, Dick's reckless swaggering, Cockney's dread of rid-



ROY AND JOHNSON.



icule, my enthusiasm, and even Johnson's impassive hardihood, were quenched in sullen and desperate silence. We had neither gibes nor jokes nor words of cheer, but munched and swallowed our cold pone and skippery bacon in silence, forcing down the few mouthfuls of unsavory food as a matter of duty, for we were too exhausted to feel hunger. Then, when the pretense of a meal was over, Roy looked up at the belt of blue sky which shone between the mountain walls two thousand feet in height, and said, curtly,

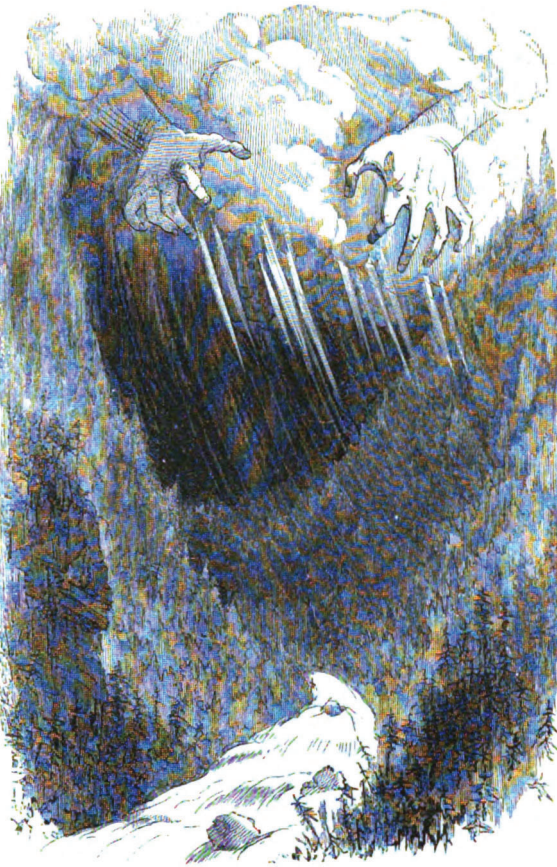
"Men, time is passing, and these is middlin' mean accommodations for travelers."

So we wore along until sunset, and then finding a flat rock which rose a foot or two above the water-line, we concluded to spend the night there. Nearly opposite this rock was the mouth of that picturesque tributary of the Blackwater upon which we had encamped in 1852, and which, in the published descriptions, was mistaken for the main stream. This we knew was only about seven miles above our starting-point at Fanceller's. Cold, hard, and rugged as it was, a flat rock was a luxury not to be despised, for in that awful gulch we might travel for miles without finding a level surface large enough to stretch our battered frames upon.

While our guides kindled a fire and gathered hemlock boughs for beds, we tourists stretched our limbs on the bare and crimped mattress of stone, esteeming it a luxury to rest even there. But the enjoyment was of brief duration, for we were presently beset with clouds of minute stinging gnats.

"Why in thunder," quoth Dick, "do they spell 'em with a 'g'?"

I'm sure I didn't know, but the letter came in very glibly and frequently in expressing our opinions concerning them, as they entered our eyes, ears, nostrils, whiskers, and eyebrows, creeping up our sleeves and down our backs, with the combined capacities of mosquitoes, fleas, and bed-bugs. It was simply infernal, and in our despair we rushed into the clouds of stifling smoke that rose from the fire, where, by enduring a lesser misery, we found a temporary protection from these barbarous insects. Finding it impossible to rest, some turned their hands to cooking supper, while others tried the



THE STORM.

stream for trout. No fish were caught, and we were fain to make the best of our mouldy biscuit and infested bacon, which, purified by fire, furnished a tolerable supper. Fortunately the guats left us after dark, and our hemlock beds afforded us a good night's rest.

There had been a thunder-shower up on the high levels during the afternoon, a milking of the clouds by the mountain-tops, and our guides were apprehensive lest we might be swept away by a sudden rise in the water. They were up frequently during the night replenishing the fire and watching the stream, but at dawn we had the satisfaction of hearing that all was safe and the river falling. Sunrise we had none, but it was pleasure to look up through the misty shadows and see the gilded summits a thousand feet above us—solid rocks and trees gleaming away up in the zenith, where one might naturally look for unsubstantial clouds. Then we gathered up our weary and stiffened limbs and breakfasted with what cheer we could, harnessed up, and resumed our journey.





THE GREAT FALLS OF THE BLACKWATER.

After progressing about two miles we saw on the opposite mountain a brook pouring like a stream of silver from the clouds, which I recognized as the Canaan Falls of the second Blackwater expedition. The sight of these beautiful cascades drew our party together, and we took occasion to discuss the prospects seriously. The sturdiest now frankly acknowledged that our powers of endurance were nearly exhausted. If any broke down or met with an accident, we were virtually beyond the reach of human assistance. Our commissariat was miserably deficient, and had been stupidly neglected in

the outset; for while we had enough of bad bread and meat, perhaps, to sustain life, we had neither coffee nor whisky, nor any of those dietetic stimulants more essential than solid food to the sustenance of men subjected to extraordinary fatigues. Yet "pride of character" was involved in the enterprise, and we resolved to push on rapidly as possible until one o'clock. If by that time we had not reached the Great Falls, the question of retreat would be seriously discussed.

It was something of a relief to understand that there was at length a definite limit fix-



ed to this contest between pride and suffering, and although the difficulties and dangers of the route had in no wise diminished, we struggled along with more resignation, if not cheerfulness, than had hitherto appeared. At length a little after mid-day, on scaling a projecting buttress, the foremost climber whirled his hat in the air and uttered a ringing shout that rose above the din of waters. Presently we were all collected on the spot, which commanded a full view of the Great Falls of the Blackwater. It was a scene of singular beauty, and for the moment all other feelings were merged in simple admiration. Then followed the not less pleasing sensation of triumph at the accomplishment of a difficult and dangerous enterprise.

Gathering its waters among the swampy glades of the broad, level summits of the Alleghany, the Blackwater winds in peaceful obscurity through dense overhanging forests for about twenty miles. Swelled with numerous tributary brooks and rivulets, it at length has attained a width of about fifty yards, and a considerable volume of water. Then its placid face begins to break into dimples and wrinkles, and its sluggish current freshens into a frolicsome race with the red deer that haunt its banks. Suddenly emerging from woodland shades, like a bold youth taking leave of his paternal shelter, the stream makes a wild leap into the abyss of life, and never thereafter knows peace or rest until engulfed in the Lethean pools of the Black Fork of Cheat.

It is estimated that in the ten miles from this point to its mouth the Blackwater falls 1500 feet—an average descent of 150 feet to the mile. This descent is not broken into alternate stretches of rapids and sluggish pools, as is commonly the case with mountain streams, but the fall is as evenly distributed as if the rugged gully was the work of an engineer. In its raging career and suggestions of irresistible power it recalls the shute below Niagara, or the Long Saut in the St. Lawrence; but the narrower bed of Blackwater is hemmed in by mountains 2000 feet in height, and its headlong current unceasingly fretted with masses of drift and monstrous boulders, so that I can remember no spot in the whole distance where an artist might study an unbroken reflection, or an angler cast a fancy fly.

But now for a study of the picture before us. Between the glittering crown of the cataract and the blue dome above there is a misty fringe of forest, from which the spindling mountain pines shoot up like Gothic spires above the smoke of some mediæval city. The ledge of rock over which the river pours projects toward the spectator in the shape of a convex semicircle, so regularly formed that, viewed in perspective from below, it presents the idea of a magnificent artificial fountain, whose amber waters, interlaced with snowy

foam, spout in massive jets and sheets from a common centre, falling in graceful curves into the black pool below. The flanking bluffs join the falls by two perpendicular walls of stratified rock, gracefully tapestried with masses of rhododendrons in full bloom. The height of the main fall is sixty feet by the line. Just under it, in the shadow, is a cat-step fall of thirty or forty feet more, completing the picturesque composition happily, both in form and *chiaro-oscuro*. Taken altogether, with its graceful lines, its rich and varied coloring, its singularly regular and art-like beauty, in the midst of this disjointed and hideous wilderness, I think this fall one of the most pleasing natural objects I ever beheld.

And thus we celebrated our victory—each going forward, catching a cupful of the rainbow spray, and in devout silence drinking to his absent love.

"Now, men," shouted Washington Roy, cheerily, shouldering his rifle and pack, "the home-bound horse needs no spur."

By night-fall we had managed to worry our way back as far as the flat rock which had been our former resting-place. The hemlock beds were ready gathered, and the embers of our morning fires still smoking. Our night's lodging was an improvement on the last, and in the morning we were pleased to perceive that the stream had fallen ten or twelve inches. Fortune also seemed to be relaxing in her asperities; for we hooked half a dozen little trout to sweeten our wretched breakfast.

As a result of our suffering, it was humiliating to observe how quickly the social amenities had disappeared from among us. Now every man dipped his own drink, and toasted his own bread and meat, never offering to divide with a comrade, but guarding each little advantage with a niggard jealousy. I had taken no trout, and no man offered to divide; so I proceeded to frizzle my unsavory fat middling in bitter silence. Just then a diminutive wood bird lighted on a branch near us, plumed his sea-green wings, and sung a little twittering song—a gossamer thread of sound, but yet distinctly and sweetly audible amidst the jarring thunder of the waters. While most of the company seemed absorbed in their selfish cookery, Roy and myself looked up at the bird simultaneously, and so our eyes met.

"How little and lonesome it sounds," he said, "in such a terrible and mighty place!"

There was poetry in the soul which could mark and appreciate the infinity of the contrast at a time like this—ay, and true chivalry in the heart that offered me that plump roasted trout on a smoking chip. My bitter pride would have declined the proffered feast; but the mountaineer's kindly eye conquered me.

"Take it, man—it'll do you good; but we





THE LITTLE FOOT-PRINTS.

rough mountain folks set no store on such weak vittles."

A cup of water sweetened with maple-sugar completed the only satisfactory meal I had made since leaving Fanceller's. It really did me good, and we resumed the downward journey with a cheerfulness only dampened by the dread of being obliged to pass another night in the wilderness. But the continued shrinking of the stream had opened a new and easier route along its margin, and by two o'clock in the afternoon, scarcely trusting our own senses, we emerged into the open meadows half a mile above Fanceller's mill. There we threw ourselves upon the grass, and for a while reposed in the triumphant joy of an accomplished adventure: something to have seen, and something to talk about for years to come. Johnson swore a round oath, and slapped his thigh for emphasis.

"Well, men, I'm glad I've to say that I've ben up Blackwater, I am. But I wouldn't undertake it agin if a man was to offer me—" (and Johnson swelled and puffed his imagination to conceive a bribe of sufficient magnitude)—"no, not if a man was to offer me four dollars a day."

Roy knew of a spring hard by, and went over to get a drink. Presently we observed him kneeling beside the rivulet, and considering something with great interest. He called his neighbor, Johnson, and we all went over, expecting to find some fresh traces of game—turkeys, deer, or perhaps bears.

"Look'ee here, men; don't them remind ye of home folks?" And the mountaineer passed his sleeve across his rugged brow as he indicated the prints of some children's bare feet in the sand.

As we approached the mill the Fancellers, men, women, and children, came trooping up the path to meet and welcome us with eager congratulations. During our absence the whole settlement had been in a state of uneasiness. All manner of mishaps had been

suggested and prophesied; and had we not got back that afternoon, an expedition would have started on the morrow to search for us. Until the following morning we enjoyed our



AMBITION'S DREAMS.



BILL GREY.

renown, feeding and sleeping like heroes. The little boy that drove the yoke of pigs abandoned his juvenile playmates, and fell to worshipping the major's boots. The pretty girl that served at table went dimpling all over with smiles. The dame of the Flemish school puffed and sweltered among the pots and ovens, radiating with good-humored admiration. She was ashamed Fanceller hadn't went up with us, she was; and so was Fanceller.

We felt already rewarded for our trouble and suffering; and then, mounting our well-rested steeds, we took leave, and rode gayly off toward Towers's store at the Horseshoe Bend, five miles distant. *En route* we encountered two wood-choppers engaged in felling a tree, and one of them immediately dropped his axe and addressed us.

"See here, men; are you the men that have jest ben up Blackwater?"

We modestly acknowledged the charge.

"Well, now, see here, men. My name's Flanagin. I was born up there in Canaan, I was; and I come down when I was a boy, and never went up agin."

The major bowed to the speaker, and intimated that he had heard of him.

"You've hearn tell of old Flanagin, have ye?" said he, with a conceited nod to his companion.

"Yes," said the major; "and I wanted to inquire if you ever got that jug of apple-jack you left up the tree."

"Oh!" quoth the woodman, rather abashed; "you must have met that lying fool, Bill Grey. But see here; I want to talk about Blackwater, I do. Jest see here, now."



And taking a large chip, he stuck it up in the sand. "Them's the falls." Then with another chip he drew a waving line across the road, sticking his "stylus" at the terminus. "That's the mouth of Blackwater, jest down here by Fanceller's. Now see here, man; jest move yer critter a bit." Looking about for another chip, and finding none handy, he seized the falls, and drew another crooked line. "Now, man, move yer critter agin. See here: this is North Fork of Potomac that heads over there by Par-a-fax's stone. You've hearn tell of that, haven't ye, men?"

Yes, we had, and knew all about it.

"Yes, but see here, now. Ephraim" (to his fellow), "hand me an armful of chips. Now move all yer critters up that way." And the excited old man proceeded to project his map on a scale that would soon have covered a South Branch estate; and our party, rather indifferent to geography, began to get restive.

The major insisted that he knew all about it, and endeavored to anticipate him by naming the points beforehand. But the map-maker refused to be understood until he laid off his plots and stuck up his chips. Every attempt at a courteous farewell was silenced by his everlasting "See here, men; jest wait, now, an' I'll show ye the course of Dry Fork, an' Laurel Fork, an' Middle Fork, an' all them."

Presently the major signaled us to hold ourselves alert.

"Friend Flanagan, now please show us the line of the Potomac as far down, say, as Cumberland."

"Yes, certain, men; see here. Where's Par-a-fax's stone? Oh! yer critter has got his foot on it. Now move yer critter a little to the right. Here's Par-a-fax's stone agin."

"Now for the Potomac," said the major.

Flanagan started down the road with his marker, and disappeared behind some laurels. Then we broke toward Towers's under whip and spur.

"South Branch jines jest here," screamed Flanagan, mounting a log to look after his audience. Beholding our flight, he started after us at full speed, with a chip in each hand.

"See here, men; stop—this is Cumberland—stop jest a minute, now—see here."

We dashed across the broad fording of the Black Fork as if a band of scalping Comanches was on our tracks, and scarcely thought ourselves safe until we drew rein at Towers's store. Even then our peace was momentarily disturbed by a suggestion that he might follow us up and recommence his illustrated lecture at the house.

"There's no danger," quoth our host; "he owes me a smart bill for whisky, and knows better than to come." This assurance was fully justified. He did not come.

## HAUNTED.

He stood by the castle door alone;  
Over the moor the winds made moan;  
Light from the painted oriels streamed;  
Bloom and fire on the snow-drifts gleamed;  
Music throbbed on the bitter air,  
Triumph chorus and trumpet's blare:  
Only through it all,  
Like a spirit's call,  
Far, sad, and low,  
Crept a little voice that said—  
Was it from the dead?—  
"None shall ever love you,  
None as I have loved you!  
Farewell; I go."

Silk and jewels and satin sheen  
Robe his bride like an Asian queen;  
Gold hath no glitter like her hair;  
Her sapphire eyes are past compare;  
Her voice is clear as a wedding bell,  
Somewhat softened her love to tell:  
Only over all  
Creeps the little call,  
Far, sad, and low,  
As if once for life it plead,  
Now forever fled:  
"None shall ever love you,  
None as I have loved you!  
Farewell; I go."

Black as midnight across the sky  
A shadow clasped him silently;  
Life that tempted and love that called,  
All that lonely soul appalled.  
Sin and grief like spectres stood  
Mixing gall with his drink and food:  
Bitterest of all  
Sounded still the call,  
Far, sad, and low;  
Softly wailed above the dead,  
Dreadfully it said,  
"None shall ever love you,  
None as I have loved you!  
Farewell; I go."

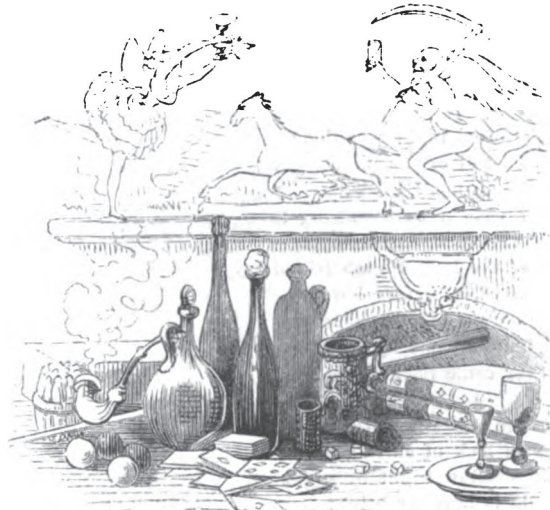
No more stars in the purple skies;  
Only tender and mournful eyes,  
Long, long looks of wan despair,  
Haunted his vision every where:  
By wooded mountain or moaning sea  
From voice and presence he could not flee;  
In the arms of love and the hush of prayer,  
The same strain whispered every where:  
"Hear above it all  
My forsaken call!  
Once a living woman said,  
Though her life was fled,  
None shall ever love you,  
None as I have loved you!  
Farewell; I go."

Now the death-pang grasps his throat;  
His eyes are blinded to beam or mote;  
Hushed is speech for sigh or prayer;  
Vainly fragrance loads the air;  
The swift feet can not stand or go;  
The blood in his cold veins will not flow:  
Yet, last of all,  
Hearth he that call,  
Sad, clear, and low,  
No more far, but overhead,  
By that dying bed:  
"None shall ever love you,  
Not in heaven above you,  
None as I have loved you!  
Farewell; I go."

ROSE TERRY.

## THE MOUNTAINS.—IX.

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



THE HIGH WAYS.

"THE American is the hero of the world. Among civilized men he is ever readiest to forsake the ease and comfort of an established home, to spurn the pleasures and allurements of a luxurious society, to turn his back on the peace and protection of an enlightened State, and devote himself by deliberate preference to a life of rudest hardship, privation, and danger. Whether the motive be worthy or despicable; whether the object be small or great; whether to gratify a longing for rash and aimless adventure or ignoble greed for sudden riches; whether to carry the seed of civilization into the wilderness or reclaim a continent from barbarism—his courage and self-abnegation are equally admirable. Abandoning the savory flesh-pots of the East without a regret, he endures malaria, swindlings, and disappointments with the exalted stolidity of an Indian fakir, and resigns himself to a diet of fried meat, saleratus bread, and pine-tar whisky with the smiling fortitude of a Christian martyr."

"True," said the major, with animation; "and does not the wild campaigner, this bold pioneer of the army of progress, get more real enjoyment out of life than the sneaking lummer who lies malingering in camp or hangs on the skirts of the battle, waiting to profit by the victory without sharing the dangers of the combat? Better wear out early than to rust and linger."

While the journey from White's had dulled the wire edge of our rough-riding fancies, the trip up the Blackwater had quite satis-

fied us with mountaineering; not surfeited exactly, but experiencing such healthy satisfaction as that philosophic Sambo who beat his own shins until the tears rolled down his cheeks, "cause it felt so good when it was done hurtin'."

Cockney, who for a week past had endured life in silent agony, was now half wild with reactionary exaltation, declaring he was ready for any thing, and wouldn't swap his recent experiences for a block on Broadway.

Rattlebrain, albeit somewhat toned down by his late shadowy misadventures, felt sufficiently revived to rate his enjoyment at the usual modest figure of a hundred thousand, cash.

Major Martial's extended experiences induced a more reasonable estimate of the ups and downs of our romantic journey, and I shrewdly guessed that now, like a skillful soldier, he was thinking more of the "enemy" in front than the character of our recent camping grounds.

Sympathizing to the full with my companions in their pride of achievement, my triumph was yet clouded by a half-acknowledged consciousness that, in spite of cheeks bronzed and ruddy with health, of muscles tough as whitleather, and omnivorous appetite, I had gained no corresponding advantages over certain intellectual and sentimental maladies which I had been especially solicitous to cure.

But, after all my efforts, it was now as ever—realities faded into dreams, while dreams were my realities. The long vista of stony startling facts had but lightly tinted the tablets of memory, while sharply and definitely graven thereon stood forth a catalogue of trifles scarcely worth the naming—the wilding beauty of a way-side flower, the working of a pretty thought or suggestion of a graceful sentiment, the changing colors of a morning cloud or the more evanescent glories of a woman's smile, to be cherished, perhaps, when fatigues and dangers, rocks and mountains, have sunk behind the dim horizon of time.

A strong man's will is like a dike raised against the sea of his nature. By eternal vigilance, strengthening and repairing, he may succeed in protecting his quiet domicile and smiling gardens behind, but he



must neither sleep nor indulge in the luxury of dreams, for the sea is always there, deep and menacing. Oily calm, its insidious waters are ever undermining; tempest-tossed, its abrading waves overwhelm his work with swifter destruction. Even while rejoicing in my triumph over difficulties, dangers, and dyspepsia, I felt the deep sea rolling over my hopeless soul. I was passionately in love.

The highway was plain and practicable, the country through which we passed without especial interest; so, giving our horses head, we rode for the most part in silence, stopping occasionally to question some rabbit-mouthed forester concerning directions and distances, or to dip a cup of water from some tempting stream that sparkled across our route. But still there was no attempt at sustained conversation, and we continued to ride apart, each apparently absorbed in his own meditations.

During these hours I had arraigned my own deceitful, treacherous heart before the high tribunal of reason, obtained its full and frank confession, weighed and accepted its plea of justification, and accorded grace to the bounding culprit. When my own case was settled I felt more lightsome and sociable, and moved by a friendly curiosity to understand the current of my companions' thoughts, spurred up my lagging steed and joined Cockney, who was just ahead of me.

He looked up dreamily. "Mr. Laureate, that South Branch country would be a glorious place to live in, wouldn't it?"

"That it would," I answered, cheerily, "with a few hundred acres of bottom land and a buxom wife—"

He interrupted me hastily. "Oh, I wasn't thinking of that, I assure you. I—I—" And the young gentleman blushed and stammered so painfully that for charity's sake I rode on, and the next moment found myself involuntarily overlooking a volume of Dick Rattlebrain's reminiscences, in the shape of a tuck memorandum-book containing several locks of hair, dried geranium leaves, and a dozen or more photographic portraits.

Without affecting any secrecy, Dick passed his collection for my inspection, requesting me not to drop any of his mementoes, at the same time heaving a few sighs, which resembled the efforts of a pump with a dried sucker.

The locks varied in 'hue from flaxen to raven—one, I am sure, was of jute—and the simpering faces that were pasted on the leaves of his book might have been plundered from any village photographer's showcase. One picture, lying loose and somewhat torn and crumpled, I recognized as Miss Primrose.

"Ah!" said I, smiling. "Did she give you that, Dick?"

Richard made an affected and futile snatch at the portrait, as if he would have concealed it, and then replied: "Well, no, not exactly; but, to tell the truth, that was the cause of our quarrel up there, you know. But you, Mr. Laureate, are so high-flung, I dare say you wouldn't think it honorable to tell about one's love matters."

"That depends on circumstances, my dear fellow."

"Well, to be sure it does; but I observe you are very careful never to name your sweetheart even among your confidential friends and companions." And with that he ostentatiously wiped his impertinent eyes with the lace handkerchief he had picked up at the tunnel.

I hastily handed back his leathern casket, and choking off an attempted repartee, dashed forward to join the major. Dick called after me in a stage whisper, "Come back, Mr. Laureate, come back and acknowledge the corn! Name her name, and I'll give you the handkerchief. 'Pon honor, you shall have it!"

The bait was indeed tempting, but I revolted at the idea of trusting my heart's secret to the indiscreet puppy; so ignoring his offer, I drew rein beside the major.

Engaged in a contest with a native cigar obtained at Horseshoe Bend, the veteran's physiognomy was so flushed and pckered that one scarcely expected there could be any spooney sentimentality under such a mask; yet when, with a little snappish oath, he presently threw away the cause of his momentary vexation, his face unraveled into a smile of unusual benignity.

"We've had a charming trip, have we not, Laureate?"

I was enthusiastic. "It was more than charming—an era in one's life, invigorating both to mind and muscle."

"Delightful!" exclaimed he. "Your enthusiasm gives us a hope of immortality in a green-backed, gilt-edged epic, at least."

"Quite the contrary," I replied, not altogether relishing his taste in dressing the Muse. "I never felt less poetical or more gloriously animal than at present. Verses are the expression of sickly sentiments and secluded humors, while I—while I am tingling with life and health."

With a wink of penetrating slyness, the major added, "And consequently can find no inspiration in the witchery of dark eyes and glowing cheeks."

I said, "Under certain circumstances. There is Martha White or Dilly Wyatt, either of whom might inspire a page or two of rhyming sentiment; but, after all, I am not such a tinder-box as our friend Dick, who instantaneously ignites under any bright eye that happens to focus on him."

"Ah, Laureate," quoth the major, with a long-drawn sigh, "you pretend to laugh at



THE BUY WAY.

your gift. I wish it were mine. "The pen is mightier than the sword."

"True," bawled Dick from behind; "and a smart widow carries them both in her reticule."

In his fury the veteran bit sheer through his second cigar, and cast the fragments into the road. Vexed at the rudeness of the graceless whelp, I nevertheless felt grateful for the interruption of a tête-à-tête which was becoming rather embarrassing. I had lately suspected the major of a design to make me his confidant in a certain matter—a sharp manœuvre by which he might effectually "spike my guns," or unmask a rivalry which he evidently apprehended. I was more than ever solicitous to avoid such a dilemma, so I held our company together, and endeavored to "switch off" conversation on another track. But the magnetic current was controlling, and although debarred from the special subject, our social leader opened a general discourse on the tendencies of modern society.

"A man's true career is amidst the dust and turmoil of life's highways."

"And I'll warrant, major, you have kicked up a considerable dust yourself in those same highways."

Disdaining the interruption, the veteran continued,

"But woman, God bless her! most naturally and gracefully seeks the by-ways."

"That she does," reiterated Dick; "and don't she make the dust fly, too!"

"Young man," growled the soldier, "this is insufferable. I shall make a personal matter of it if you don't abstain."

"I am very sorry, major," quoth Rattle-

brain, with affected meekness, "but I thought I was helping you on with your speech."

The philosopher succeeded in curbing his own temper by tugging at his horse's bridle, which so chafed the spirited brute that he dashed off, bearing his master beyond the reach of present annoyance.

"The old humbug!" quoth Dick, looking after him. "He has been trying his best to bribe or cajole me out of this handkerchief, and to keep 'mum' about my having found it, but he couldn't raise the thousands to buy it. Not for Joe!"

My cheek burned as I put the question, but I could not forbear asking Rattlebrain why he prized this special bit of lace and cambric so extravagantly—he, the possessor of trophies enough to adorn

the belt of an Apache chief.

"I value it," said Dick, with a roguish leer, "because it belongs to the handsomest and smartest woman in Virginia." Then sidling up, he continued, in a confidential tone, "And because I am sure the lady would prefer to have it in your keeping." So saying, he slipped the precious trinket into my hand. My brain reeled with the wine of sudden joy as I heard the words and clasped the treasure. Then with the ebbing tide of feeling came a suggestion of prudential pride—I must not suffer myself to be thus bribed into confidential relations with so indiscreet and unreliable a friend. I stammered, and hesitated.

"Keep it, Larry. Don't make a Judy of yourself, and let that old padded-up major cut you out. Don't you think I understand and appreciate the sacrifice you made in waiting for me at the tunnel?"

"It is very kind in you to recall that, Dick." And I felt like embracing the amiable scape-grace on the spot, nevertheless contented myself with a less demonstrative grasp of the hand, then hid away my prize to dream on at leisure, and continued to dis-course of fishing, hunting, and mountaineering as amusements worthy of the gods.

At the end of twenty-three miles we reached the Winston Tavern, on the Winchester and Parkersburg turnpike, and although it was only an hour past mid-day, we concluded to lay by and rest until the following morning.

During the afternoon our company was swelled by the addition of sundry teamsters and drovers, habitués of the road, and several mountaineers who straggled in to pick



up items of information from the great world outside, to chaffer about cattle, and incidentally to mix a little narcotic stimulant with their news as a digester. Among these we remarked a tall, athletic, black-bearded fellow, whose eye twinkled with a certain savage facetiousness, and whose swaggering sociability shamed all ceremony. Approaching our party, he saluted with the grace of a man who has had a bear for his dancing-master, and opened conversation in the lingo of the mountains, mixed, jumbled, and inflated with words and phrases which indicated some remote acquaintance with books or educated society. Seeing that we were disposed to be amused with his eccentric guest, the landlord joined us, and suggested that Mr. Rowzey should entertain us with his great bear story.

"Well, now, Best, you know I've fit and killed so many bar in my time that your request appears ondefinite."

Mr. Best particularized, "Of that bout you had with the bears who stole your honey."

"Now, Best," quoth Rowzey, in a deprecating tone, "I wouldn't mind a-tellin' of that story to you or any of these mountain men about here, bekase you know hit's every word the truth; but these gentlemen are entire strangers to me, as most likely they are to bar-huntin', and they mought think some pints of that story rather strong for their civilized stomachs, and I bein' a person notorious for my character and judicious of my integrity, and respectably connected down in the old State, I shouldn't risk to have my word misdoubted, 'specially among gentlemen sich as these appears to be."

The major here assured the speaker that we were ready to pledge ourselves in advance to believe every word he said, and as the weather was sultry, he requested Mr. Best to serve a large pitcher of mint-julep.

"Them remarks," said Rowzey, "shows



ROWZEY.



DISAGREEMENT.

that you understand business, and are jist the gentlemen I took you for."

After a preliminary drink and some wordy compliments to the liquor, the historian seated himself and began his story:

"A bar is looked upon by the onexperienced as a mighty turrible beast; and so he is, 'specially if he happens to be an old she. The bar is also a mazin cute cretur, and can tell by a man's countenance whether he's good to eat or not. Now as for you, Sir"—touching his hat to the major—"a sensible bar would most likely walk around you and trot off; but this here feller"—laying his hand on Cockney's shoulder—"he'd make a comfortable meal of at first sight."

The audience laughed, and Rowzey took another drink.

"A bar," he continued, "is an animal to be respected and imitated. He seldom goes out of his way to injure any body, but he don't stand much foolin' if any body undertakes to meddle with him. He remembers a good turn longer than most men do, and if he has a weakness for honey, I've never knowed him, of his own accord, to mix it with any thing deleterious. So much for the principal character in my story, and I must follow with a short sketch of myself before I come to the main pint. Not far from where I was borned there lived an old woman that was believed to be a witch. Now whenever a baby was borned she could tell at first sight what he or she was likely to be good for in the world. When she see

my oldest brother lookin' so cute out of his eyes, and holdin' his little fists so tight, she condemned him to be a lawyer. And so it was. He turned out to be one of the biggest rascals in Southwestern Virginia. The second boy my mother fetched was prophesied for a famous politician, and he grewed up still worse than the lawyer, if so be sich a thing is possible. Now when the old woman was called on to look at me, she sot for a long time in a kind of a brown-study. At last she spoke up. 'This boy,' says she, 'has got the gifts that might set him ahead of either of his brothers, but it would be a shame to bring up sich a stout and open-handed baby to any of them weakly, sneakin' businesses.'

"Daddy took the thing to heart, and bein' flattered with her prognostications concernin' of me, concluded to do full justice to my faculties and bring me up as a bar-hunter; and so he christened me Rowzey, after old Leather Bill Atkins's big bar dog. This dog aforesaid was so turrible on wild varmints that Brother Ballard, the lawyer (who was high larnt), told Leather Bill if he wasn't stopped there would be no game left in the mountains—no more than there was in the island of Chios after Orion's raid. Not bein' much addicted to Scripture, I don't know what that meant. No more did old Leather; but the expression skeered him, and he sent the dog away.

"Well, no sooner was I fairly weaned than daddy begins my eddication by gittin' me a six-months-old bar cub for a playmate. That



cub we named Rough, accordin' to his nater, and he was a very comfortable friend as long as we were rompin' or sleepin' together; but when our bowl of mush-and-milk was sot down there was a suspension of sociabilities until one of us got a sound wallop in', and the winner finished the mush-and-milk.

"Rough and me generally fit fair, but he would sometimes take a mean advantage when he found I had the upper hand in a fight; he upst the pan, well aware that when it came to lapping milk off the floor he was boss and I nowhere. In spite of these little onpleasantnesses we both managed to keep fat and hearty, and no outside beast or human ever undertook to poke his snout between us without feelin' the strength of our friendship. When we had growed to be three or four years old, Rough, accordin' to bar nater, had got so far ahead of me, and so careless about my clothes, that mammy begin to feed us in separate pans. This new plan was so mighty quiet that mammy, fearing we might pine for our usual exercise and excitement, would sometimes slop a bowl of milk into the mush pot, and allow us to go for the scrapin's. Gentlemen, are you acquainted with scrapin's?"

We were constrained to acknowledge our ignorance of the term. With a smile of benignant pity for our simplicity, the narrator proceeded:

"In our settlement it was the pride of good housekeepin' to keep the mush-pot always hot and never empty, and what with

fillin' and refillin' you might reckon it would git pretty well gummed up. It was cooled off and scraped mostly of a Saturday evenin'. Now, gentlemen, them scrapin's, all so crisp and crusty, had a flavor that was mighty enticin' to boys and bars, and I can't help feelin' sorry for a feller whose boyhood hain't been enriched with the recollection thereof. But to foller the text. Although it mought be supposed human wit would have given me some advantage over a brute beast, yet, to tell the truth, Rough's muscle was gittin' a little too much for my strength and science together, as appeared one day when a whole coach-load of our lawyer and politician relatives come to make a sociable visit to daddy and mammy. I believe the whole notion of it was to befool him and her into signin' some paper, that they mought cheat him outen his land. But the bar and me knowed nothin' of that, bein' sent together into the kitchen when the company landed, mammy bein' ashamed to show us with the pretty children all dressed in store clothes and ribbons. But this put Rough and me both in a bad humor; so we fell a-quarrelin' between ourselves, and presently we had a row, and he slapped me into the slop-tub head-foremost, where I mought have drowned if, at the same time, he hadn't upst the tub in his awkwardness. Now our visitors had jist laid off their cloaks and bonnets, and was a-slickin' up their children's curls, and a-braggin' of their smartness, when in I straddled, drippin' out of the slops, and bawlin'



SCRAPIN'S.



MAMMY.

like a bull-calf. Now mammy was one of those hard-headed women that set no value on calico and store knickknacks for herself, but to see her brag child cuttin' sich a figure in company was a little too much, and she flared up like an armful of brush.

"'Husband,' said she, 'either that boy or that bar has got to leave this house. The brute has outgrown the child, it has, and they can't git along agreeable no more, and on account of its onmannerliness it's onpossible to keep Rowzey dressed decent, it is.'

"'Well, what's to be done about the boy's eddication?' says dad.

"Mammy suggested that I was gittin' big enough to go to school. Dad had hearn say it was more aristocratic and safer for the children's morals to have a private tutor, so he swore we should hold on to the bar.

"Things went on as usual for a while, when the family dispute was settled by a onforeseen circumstance. One day I was roastin' of a tater in the ashes, when I observed Rough a-settin' off by the door a-watchin' me out of the corner of his eye. I mistrusted his intentions, and as I knowed I was no longer a match for him in a scramble, I jist kivered my tater a little deeper, and slyly put the poker to heat in the coals. When it was done, I took up the poker and poked out my tater on the hearth. No sooner was it clear of the hot ashes than Rough's paw covered it, and slap went the red poker atop of his paw. There was a yell you mought have heard a mile off, and the whole cabin smelt of burnt har. I was scared myself; so, droppin' the poker and hustlin' up my roast, I started for the stable loft, but at the room-door I met daddy comin' in all in a flare.

"'Rowzey,' said he, 'what have you been a-doin' to that poor brute beast?'

"'Nothin',' says I, feelin' mighty mean. 'He grabbed my tater, and I licked him, that's all. And it was a fair fight.'

"But what do you think the cussed brute

done? Why, he jist held up his burnt paw to show daddy, and then went nosin' and whinin' around the hot poker, tellin' the whole story in fewer words than any human could have done. Well, dad jist divided his judgments by givin' Rough the tater and givin' me fits, which was sweetened by my seein' the brute eat it, all the while makin' impudent faces at me, while I stood snivelin' in a corner. We never had any more friendship or confidence in each other after that. All the artfulness of my nater was roused by the wish to git square with the brute unbeknowns to daddy; and Rough never see me pick up any thing after that, even a chip, that he didn't run and hide hisself.

"Mammy took advantage of the coolness, and poor Rough, like Ishmael, was sent back into the wilderness. After he was gone it come back to me that I had acted a mighty mean part toward my old companion, and for many a day I felt lonesome and pinin' whenever I thought of him. Then I was sent to school a while, where I was licked through from *a b ab* to *Constantinople* in less than two years, fit the boys, kissed the girls, and picked up an amount of book larnin' and high dic. that has been an advantage to me ever since, as you gentlemen can plainly see. But as soon as I had growed big enough to handle a rifle dad took me home agin, to shine up my professional eddication under hisself. Tinchin' lightly on the vulgar business of plowin' and plantin' corn, he larnt me to track a deer and line a wild bee to sich a certainty that we never was scarce of meat nor honey in our house, though we did sometimes have to trade for corn meal. One evenin', as I was a-comin' home from watchin' a deer lick, I meets a bar right in the path. I was so took by surprise that I fired my gun in the air, then quickly dropped it, and drewed my butcher knife; but the varmint wasn't so much scared, and sot up on his hind-legs, shadin' his eyes with his paw, as if he was tryin' to make out who I was. That paw I noticed had a streak of white har across it, and the



DADDY.



next minute we was hugged in each other's arms; for you may well believe old Rough and me was mighty pleased to see each other.

"Now, gentlemen, a dog can always express his feelin's, or git our good-will, by a 'movin' tail,' but a bar is not likewise gifted, bein' limited to wry faces and awkward paws, and to have seen old Rough tryin' to say his say would have made you bust a-laughin'; but, gentlemen, it was plain to see the cretur's heart was in the right place. He bore me no grudge for the past, and tried to hide that scarified paw for fear I mought feel bad about it. Seein' that my old friend wasn't nigh so sleek and glossy as he used to be, I concealed he was leadin' a tolerable hard life, and tried to persuade him to foller me home, explainin' to him that we wasted enough at the cabin to keep him fat to the eend of his days. But no; his mind was fixed; his only answer was a mournful shake of the head, and givin' me a far'well squeeze, he trotted away into the woods. As he went, I thought I see him lift his paw to wipe a fallin' tear. You may laugh, gentlemen, but there is more humanity about dumb creturs than we are awar' of mostly.

"For a long time after that I was afeard to risk a shot at a bar, and to shun temptation, give up carryin' a gun, and turned my attention chiefly to huntin' bee trees. They were plenty enough in our mountains, and for convenience I built me a camp some way off from the settlements, and hewed out a

big trough to hold the honey I gathered. Now I filled my trough from time to time, but every night the varmints come and cleaned me out, which I knowed to be bars, seein' their tracks, and bein' awar' of their likin's. After losin' my labor in this way for some time, I bethinks me of a plan for gittin' even with 'em. I gits me a keg of peach brandy, and savin' a very moderate supply for my own needcessities, I pours the liquor into my trough, and mixed it pretty thick with honey. Then I whetted my knife, and retired to the camp to watch the effect of my trap. I carried a gourd full of the mix with me, which was so cussed sweet that I can't mind any thing more that happened until to-morrow mornin', when I was wakened by a hellabaloo the like of which I never heard before nor since. Clearin' the husks out of my throat with a swig from my jug, I draws my kuife, and creeps on all fours toward the honey trough, where I see a sight which filled me with astonishment and laughter. The whole place was black with bars. I wouldn't like to risk my reputation—which is ondoubted—by statin' the number. There mought have been a hundred, more or less, of all ages and sizes, from an old six-hundred-pounder to a six-months cub, all drunk as Christians. Now the longer I studied their doin's the more nateral they looked, jist as I've seed civilized humans carryin' on up at Beverly after an election-day. Sich was the elevatin' influences of good liquor on savage brutes, which



JOLLIPLICATION.



PATENT BALANCE.

appeared to raise 'em so nigh to our level, that as I laid there watchin' for a chance to go in I begin to feel as if I was plottin' murder agin my fellow-creturs.

"Howsomdever, what I mought have concluded don't much signify, for presently an old sot, happenin' to stagger into the thicket where I was hid, caught sight of me, and give a yell that fairly lifted the hat off my head, and fetched every bar to his feet. Apparently my time was short; but still calculatin' to stampede 'em, I up with a mighty shout, slitherin' the old blatherskite that raised the alarm. I went in through the brush like a whirlwind. It was a foolish idee. Peach-and-honey don't make brutes skeery no more than it does men, and in less than two minutes I was smotherin' under a squirmin' stack of bar meat about the size of dad's cabin. Now, as I wasn't smashed to death, my position mought be rightly considered providential, for the bodies of the brutes that lay next to me kivered me agin the teeth and claws of the outsiders, and bein' well-nigh smothered themselves, they was obliged to fight outward for fresh air. But it don't signify to be tellin' how I got out of there, for I don't exactly know myself. Howsomdever, when I rose and got my breath, I see the bars all around me fightin' among theirselves, makin' the fur fly like feathers at a goose-pluckin', and quite onmindful of the stranger among 'em. I mought have cleared myself then, but my blood was up, and I walked through 'em,

stabbin' right and left, onmerciful as a mad wild-cat, respectin' neither age nor sex. Jist then several old fellers appeared to git a smell of me, and closed in mighty savage. While I fit in front, a rascally old squeezer grabbed me round the neck from behind. I struck backward, feelin' my knffe enter his cussed carcass a dozen times; but it didn't loosen his grip, and I felt my strength goin'. At this pint a big bar poked his head up from behind the honey trough, rubbin' his little eyes as if he had jist waked up. In a minute he broke for us.

"'Rowzey,' thinks I, 'it's time for family worship. Now I lay me down to sleep—'

"As I prayed I made a stab at the big he, who shunned the blade, and, to my astonishment, grabbed the beast in front of me with his left paw, sendin' him heels over head; then with his right he tore the feller off my back. I was too far gone to ask questions, but bein' loose once more, I broke for camp. There I barricaded myself in with poles, and laid pantin' and sippin' peach-and-honey until I fairly come to my strength agin. It took me some time longer to git up pluck enough to venture back toward the battleground. Howsomdever, late in the afternoon I did creep down that way, mighty like a sheep dog at first, but bolder when I see that every thing was quiet. Around that honey trough lay twenty-two dead bar, young and old. Gentlemen, I value my reputation too high to weigh it agin bar meat. Gentlemen, I counted them bodies as they





POTATO ROW, BETWEEN ROMNEY AND MOORFIELD.

lay, and you may think I was mighty proud as I viewed the ground. Well, I mought have been, but there was one corpse too many there for my peace of mind. Over by the honey trough, jist where my life was saved, as I thought, by the miraculous mistake of a drunken old bar, there lay two bodies, clutched in a death grip, jist as they had fell fightin'. They were badly tore, and the leaves all around soaked and stained; but as I stooped over to look closer, I felt a cold shiver that froze clean to my bones. There was the white paw, stiff and bloody. Gentlemen, there lay Rough, my old playmate."

The rugged hunter drew his sleeve across his eyes, reached over for the pitcher, and turned it bottom upward over his empty glass.

"Well, is that all?" asked Dick, drawing a long breath.

"Hit's all the liquor," quoth Rowzey, with a dry wink. "Of the story there's yit another pint or two at your service."

"Well, I went to work savin' my meat with a heavy heart, and next day got some fellers up from the settlements with horses and sleds to help me down with it. There was sich a pile that all the neighbors gathered in to look and git a share, and there was a mighty guessin' and bettin' on the weight. Now we had no steelyards nor scales of any kind; but there was old Bill Swanson, who had got weighed onst when he was down to the Kanawha Salt-works, and accordin' to his recollection, which was good when he staid sober (which he never did willin'ly), he drewed jist two hundred and eighty, down weight, on the salt-works scales. Well, we jist laid a stout rail acrost a stump, seesaw fashion, and sot old Bill on one eend and piled bar meat on the other, till we got his heft—which we did; I now disremember whether hit was seven or seventeen times. Howsomdever, none of us bein' scholars enough to substract that together, we scored the times on a saplin', till the school-master come along to cipher it up for us. But every body 'lowed they never see sich a pile of meat in all their born days."

"And did you never try that trap again, Rowzey?"

"Oh yes; for you see, after old Rough was dead I had no mercy on bar any more, and I sot that same trap over and over. But I

fooled away my liquor and honey; for though my bait was took regularly, I never see bar nor a bar's track in that neighborhood arterward. But onst I see old Bill Swanson lurkin' around thar, and havin' my own suspicions, I left off settin'."

"And did you eat old Rough with the rest?" inquired Dick.

"Mister," said the mountaineer, with a gesture of indignant scorn, "sich a question is a discredit to the feller that asks it. Do I look like a lawyer or a heathen cannibal? No, Sir; I buried him decent and respectable, with all his har on him, jist as I would a Christian friend, and I tarred his name on a smooth clapboard, and stuck it up at his head. And thar he mought have rested in peace to this day; but some of them high-scienced fellers from the East come a-nosin' and a-scratchin' through that country, and mistakin' the grave for an Injin mound, they excawated poor Rough's bones and sent 'em to Barnum's Institute, at Washington city, where I've hearn say they stands in a glass case, as the skeleton of a celebrated Injin chief, between a par of General Washington's old breeches and General Jackson's night-cap, which he wore at the battle of New Orleans."

The narrator heaved a deep sigh, and bowed to the company.

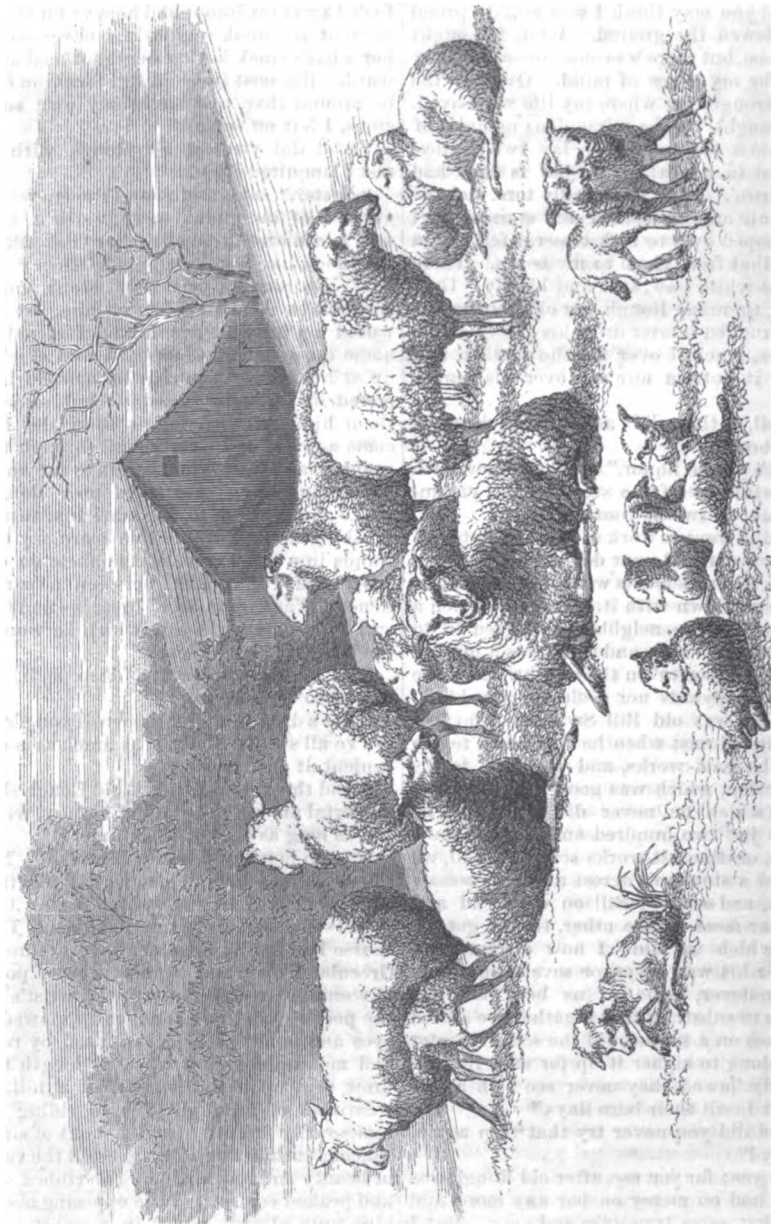
"Not a drop more, gentlemen, if you please. We've all swallered about as much as is convenient at one time."

"And thus," said I, "shall old Rough shine immortal among the stars of history, with a tail as long as that of Ursa Major!"

Now to horse, and ho for Moorfield! Near the close of a long summer's day our travelers were still in the saddle, urging their jaded steeds along the woodland road. Their course had led by Reamer's tavern, through Greenland Gap, and by many other points of scenic interest well worth the artist's and the poet's study, but negligently viewed by eyes and minds so long saturated by rocks and mountains. But when at length they drew rein upon the summit of a hill, the weariness of forty miles' hard riding was temporarily forgotten, and a shout of simultaneous enthusiasm again greeted the valley of beauty and abundance. The ribbed sides and peaked contours of the opposing mountains were already veiled in a sweet violet

haze. The winding river, roofs, and cupolas flashed back the golden rays of the western sun. Fleecy flocks and stately herds dotted the emerald carpets that covered hill-side and meadow far and near. For miles and miles, until lost in the dim perspective, stretched the green corn fields, the armed and embattled hosts of peace, splendid with their million glittering blades and tasseled crests. This beauty, indeed, might the painter dimly render, that subtler charm

the poet convey in golden words; but what art, or combination of arts, could grasp or reproduce that scene as we saw it then, with all its glowing attributes of time and circumstance? The sudden scene-shifting after our thirty days' sojourn in the grim, hard-featured wilderness; the luxurious sense of release from self-imposed privation, of rest from a rough task honorably accomplished; the stifling sweetness of hopes unspoken, ay, unacknowledged, but overmastering even the



ABUNDANCE





"WELL, DAMN MY STOCKINGS!"

stern will of ambition. Quickly succeeding the emotions of the moment came the realization of our present material relations to the world we were just entering, and we halted on the river-bank to cool off and consider.

"Dusty, weather-beaten, unshaven, ragged."

"Dirty!" added Major Martial, stooping to lave his face and hands in the cooling stream.

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated Cockney, as he stood fascinated with horror over the crystal mirror; "can this be possible? Why, at first I thought it was Rattlebrain looking over my shoulder."

Dick had drawn his boots, and attracted our attention to the development by a startling imprecation: "Well, darn my stockings! look at this!"

With me there was a "solution of continuity" at every angle. We were decidedly not presentable, and concluded to stop for the night at Mullen's Hotel.

Our trunks, with reserves, were all out at Mr. Meadows's. We proposed to send a servant with a light wagon to bring them in, when, rather to our surprise, Augustus proposed to accompany him. It would look better, he thought, for one of our party to call at once—not to see the ladies, of course, but simply to signify our return, and make polite inquiries.

"Certainly," replied Dick; "if you are anxious to exhibit your dilapidated carcass, we won't object."

And to our still greater astonishment, Cockney, "accounted as he was," took his seat beside the driver, and departed. In an hour they returned with our baggage, and accompanied by Mr. Meadows, who brought peremptory orders that we should refit at once and join the ladies at supper at his house. Cockney, in spite of dirt and fatigue, was beaming with smiles, and sported a rose in his ragged button-hole. Perceiving that I remarked it, he took me aside and half whispered,

"You may think a little strange, Mr. Laureate, of my apparent eagerness to show myself at head-quarters in this beastly condition, but I had made a promise to Miss Lilly while up on Gandy. You understand?"

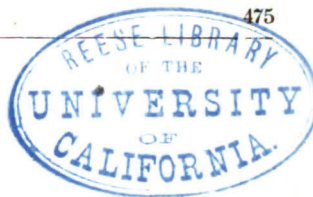
"Your conduct has been truly chivalric, Augustus, and you were rewarded with smiles and roses, as you deserved."

"Yes, something more than smiles," replied Cockney, "for she laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks; but I don't think it was intended to make game of me, for, observing my mortification, she made sweet amends by giving me this rose."



ROSES.

THE MOUNTAINS.—X.  
ILLUSTRATED BY PORTE CRAYON.



THE CHIEF MARSHAL.

**T**HE wheat harvest was gathered, and the heats of midsummer were beginning to drive all who had means and leisure to congregate about the famous springs and cool places in the mountains—those charming shades,

"The choice resort of many an ancient quiz,  
Who comes to cure his gout or rheumatiz,  
While younger votaries, in the German reeling,  
Can take a course of Terpsichorean heeling,"

where our city matrons and misses find an agreeable refuge from their hot bricks and odoriferous gutters, and their provincial sisters enjoy the annual opportunity of studying urban graces and town fashions on equal

terms. For on the paved sidewalk or carpeted saloon the boldest country lass is quelled and cowed by her conscious ignorance of the great art. But in strolling over snaky meadows, climbing lizard-haunted fences, or galloping through shadowy forests, the abode of horse-flies and ground-squirrels, our Maude may play the heroine to protect and patronize her fashionable cousin, and receive proudly her grateful acknowledgments, in the shape of a new wriggle in the dance, the most stylish turn of a Dolly Varden, or exquisitely artistic twist of a jute chignon.

At this crisis it was announced to the





PRELIMINARY EXERCISE.

company at Meadland that a grand tournament would be held at the Ice Mountain on the 10th of August, proximo, the lists being free to all the chivalry of the land, highland or lowland, town or country, home or foreign.

This announcement, for the hour, overcame the listlessness of a July morning, and we all gathered around Rhoda for an answer.

"Certainly, gentlemen, this is a challenge no true knight can refuse." Then she turned her dark languishing eyes on me—"And you, Mr. Laureate, will do me a special favor—"

I trembled with triumphant excitement. "And I, madam, if I may wear your colors, will win you a crown of stars."

"And I," interposed the major, briskly, "was about to request the same privilege."

"Excuse me, major," said I, choking with anger; "I think the lady addressed herself to me."

The veteran's face reddened to a clouded mahogany, and he spoke with a haughty and defiant formality:

"Pardon me, Sir; although I may not enjoy the honor of being her selected knight, the rules of the tourney do not exclude a second champion for the same lady; we may venture to compete for the prize at least, may we not?"

"Gentlemen," said Rhoda, biting her lip, and suppressing a smile, "this is hasty and unkind. I had no thought of bidding for the silly crown of the tournament. Leave that honor to the mountain lasses, who will enjoy it, and to whom it properly belongs. I only meant to propose that Mr. Laureate

should dignify the rustic entertainment by writing a prologue suited to the occasion—a task which his graceful talents could accomplish most appropriately and agreeably."

I was profoundly snubbed, angry, and confused. Not as her chosen knight, with steed and lance, was I to appear in the lists, but as the pitiful poetaster of the day, the poor minne-singer whose duty was to flatter and extol the triumphant actors in the gallant strife. This was too much, and I stalked indignant from the room.

Rhoda followed me, and as I was about descending the steps into the lawn, I felt her hand upon my arm.

"Pray, Mr. Laureate, don't resent my thoughtless suggestion as an indignity to your lofty art. Forgive my simplicity, if I have offended."

Forgive!—lofty art!—simplicity! Why, that look and voice flowed over my soul as a stream of golden honey ingulfs some helpless moth.

"Lady Rhoda, your slightest wish shall be my law. My art is honored by your orders, and I was only vexed that the task assigned should be so trivial and easily accomplished."

"I thank you for your polite acquiescence," said she, "but you evidently disdain the task, and I have half a mind to withdraw my request." Then she sighed, and her dark eyes seemed dreamily intent on something a thousand miles away. "For of that grim and barbaric institution, with its fantastic and affected sentiments, its atrocious and inhuman realities, its cruel and vindictive spirit, who would wish to remember any thing except what has been

dignified and purified by the gentle minstrelsy of the troubadours? And what that royal poet, artist, and chevalier, the good King René of Provence, has so gracefully and charmingly done for the tournaments of his country and generation, I thought might be no unworthy task for the most punctilious poet and gentleman of our own."

I was overwhelmed, and replied, in an imploring tone, "Madam, if I do not drown myself in the Branch within the next hour, the prologue shall certainly be forth-coming."

"Pray, don't think of that; it is not at all chivalric; but do what I bid you;" and with the slightest touch of coquetry in her manner, the widow ungloved her left hand and threw me the tiny gauntlet. "There, my gallant troubadour, is a pen-wiper for you."

Then she retired, and Major Martial gave my hand a friendly wrench, and half whispered: "All open and understood between us, Larry Laureate. A courteous tourney between pen and lance. Let the best man win her, and the loser dance at the wedding."

I returned the soldier's hearty grip, and responded in the same tone. The sense of concealed rivalry which had hitherto haunted and hampered me was now gone. I was free to love and win my lady without violating the laws of friendship, and, in truth, I thought the prospect was not discouraging.

The major and myself walked together to the stables, where we saw Dick Rattlebrain, already mounted, and armed with a dried corn-stalk, charging across the field like a drunken Comanche. There was Augustus too, grasping a bean pole, and arguing in a nervous and undecided manner with the snickering hostler, who was urging him to mount the excited and skittish colt, which he held ready by the bridle.

We ordered our horses, and while awaiting the harnessing, the soldier amicably condescended to give the neophyte some lessons in horsemanship.

"First throw away that stupid pole," said he. "Now mount your horse, and let him understand he carries his master. That accomplished, you will need about ten days' training in the details of his management. Then you may take up the lance and practice with it."

Cockney was happy; and perceiving that I was mounting, the soldier asked if I would join their exercises. I declined, being off for a solitary ride in the woods.

The major winked facetiously. "Rather in the clouds on your famous winged courier. I wish you a fortunate flight."

"And if I should not re-appear for a fortnight, pray make my excuses to Mr. Meadows and the ladies, and permit no inquiries."

The major looked surprised, but not altogether displeased. He promised, and I departed.

Once outside the farm gate, I gave my fancy and my steed the reins, and let them take their own courses. I took the widow's graceful little talisman from my pocket, kissed it, and delivered my soul up to its leading. My horse, naturally enough, wended his way to the next stable he knew of, and I presently found myself in Moorfield, in front of Mullen's Hotel.

A cavalier on a black horse had just left, and as he rode down the street, the stable-boys and idlers on the porch were commenting on them.

"That black mare is the loveliest runner and the sensiblest animal I ever saddled," said one.

"Yes, and he's the steadiest and lightest rider in the valley. I've seed him carry a glass of water on her at full speed, and never spill a drop."

"They say she can outrun a deer in a fair race, and he can shoot one from the saddle, at full speed, as easy as if he was behind a fence. Well, if he enters for the tournament, it's no use for any one else to ride."

"Well, it's more in the mare than the man. Put him on another hoss, and he'll miss like the rest."

"But he trained her, and it's his mare, and how are you going to separate them? He wouldn't sell nor lend her for the best farm in the valley."

"Who is he?" I asked, eagerly.

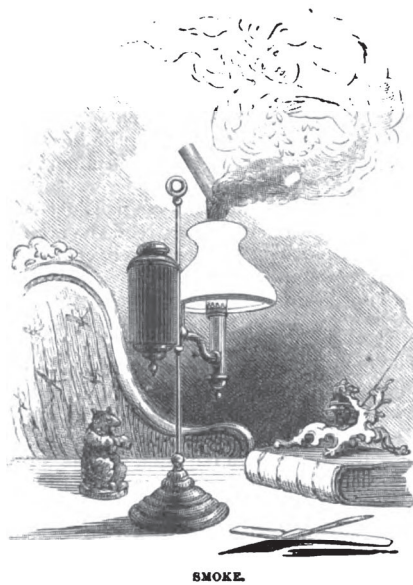
"That's Raphael, a chap that paints pictures, rides at tournaments, and runs about in the mountains."

Piqued with a thought, I piqued my horse with a spur, and presently overtook the subject of this discourse. This was the hero of the Dry Fork romance, and rarely in this world have I found the real presence of a celebrity so satisfactorily fulfill the ideal.

His figure was a model of athletic grace; over the middle height, but not too tall; a mass of blonde ringlets fell upon his manly shoulders; a light peaked beard gave character to a face which might otherwise have been pronounced effeminately handsome; a close-fitting suit of gray jeans set off his fine person to advantage, and he wore his drover's slouch as if it were the plumed sombrero of a Spanish cavalier. His manner was grave, with a distant and formal courtesy which did not belong to the region. The expression of his face was sad and absent, as of one who has dreamed and is disgusted at having been awakened—a soul that has aspired and found its wings clipped—a tropical seed chance-dropped in a chilling clime, which has sprouted and blossomed, but failed to fruit.

I was interested and attracted, and soon melted the ice of his reserve. Our discourse turned upon his mare and the tournament. He lived down the Branch several miles, and was going to exercise at tilting in the





afternoon. I accepted a cordial invitation to join him, and thereafter we were inseparable for a fortnight.

Raphael lived as a bachelor, with a couple of servants, who attended to his personal wants as bachelors are usually served, but the mare was waited on as if she had been the favorite of an Arab sheik. If the furniture of his house was scanty and dilapidated, there were costly rifles, fowling-pieces, fishing rods, and abundance of dogs to atone for all deficiencies. There was also a confusion of books, tobacco-pipes, unfinished paintings (of no especial merit), and masses of torn and blurred sketches.

With these hints, I found it easy to draw out my host in our after-supper conversation. He had traveled extensively and vaguely, without definite aim or method, just as he had read and worked. His talk was fluent and entertaining. He was an expert in all the sports of the mountains, but a scorner of social restraints and drudgeries; he therefore shunned society and shrunk within himself, useless and misunderstood. Underlying all this there was a romance, of course, but we did not delve deep enough to develop it.

From hunting and tilting our discourse very naturally turned on chivalry.

The classic ancients knew nothing of chivalry. They did not understand the point of honor, and assassinated instead of fighting duels. They were equally ignorant of gallantry toward the fair sex, and condescended to kiss their ladies only for the mean purpose of discovering whether they had been surreptitiously tipping Champagne or anisette. In their wars they

relied altogether on their infantry, and from their sculptures and paintings it is evident they nourished a very absurd breed of horses. Even the divine Homer vaunts the prowess of his princes and heroes in blackguard pugilistic encounters, and the great Olympic Games were as vulgar and brutal as the modern exhibitions of Jim Mace and Tom Hyer. The chariot race was inferior in interest to the trotting matches at our agricultural fairs, and there is nothing in history, ancient or modern, to equal in beastliness the public shows of the Roman Colosseum. On the other hand, the Gothic tournament was the most splendid, romantic, and exciting of all the public games and festivals that have ever been established in any age or country; and it was from Asia, that nursery of all that is sublime in imagination, exalted in sentiment, magnificent in display, and thorough-bred in horseflesh, that the *chevaleresque* idea was introduced into Europe, and took root among the ruins of the ancient civilization; for while a man may be brave, patriotic, and even virtuous on foot, it is impossible for him to be gallant, romantic, proud, magnanimous, and, in short, chivalric, without the inspiration of a noble horse. La Croix says: "Le mot, chevalerie, exprime un ensemble de mœurs, d'idées, et de coutumes, particulier au moyen âge européen, et dont l'analogue ne se retrouve pas dans les annales humaines." It rose in Europe with the Gothic cathedral, closely intertwined with that sublime religion which united in its service all the courage, capacity, and genius of a romantic and wonderful age. Love, faith, and honor were the white angels, lawless pride, lust, and vengeance the fiends, blazoned on its banners. Ossian and the *Nibelungen Lied* sing of chivalry in its lusty, untrammelled, and heroic youth.

When Froissart wrote, the tendency of events had already marked its decline, as the fierce and haughty independence of the feudal noble was quelled by the centralizing power of kings, and the purity of knighthood sullied by the corrupting influences of courts. Yet, even at that period, the romantic idea prevailed that it was essential to a gentleman's character to pay his debts, and men faced fatigues, privations, and death itself rather than fail in their plighted faith.

Then comes the discovery of gunpowder, and, foreshadowing the fact, Ariosto sings how the brave Roland captures a shooting-iron from a felonious governor, and throws the abominable invention into the sea with this indignant exclamation: "Go, base and unworthy weapon, that no true knight may ever use—forged by Beelzebub—whereby cowardice, weakness, and rascality may triumph over strength, courage, and justice!" But the brave Roland was mistaken. Gun-

powder only cracked the shell and demanded a change of weapons: indeed, it elevated the rôle of knighthood by discarding mere brutal strength from the catalogue of chivalric virtues, and exalting the power of courage and justice.

It was really the discovery of printing that killed chivalry, soul and body. Then the power that comes of knowledge passed over to the unarmed people. The unlettered prince could no longer delegate the writing and reading of his letters to a hired varlet, and the doughty Douglas dared no longer boast,

"Thank Heaven that no son of mine  
Save Gawain ever penned a line."

It became a question of learning to read, instead of learning to ride. Life is not long enough for both. Warriors were superseded by philosophers, tournaments by scholastic disputations; study bowed the stalwart frame, the pen cramped the iron hand, Latin and Greek quelled the passionate energy, while subtleties and dogmas addled the simple brain of knighthood, incidentally engendering more quarrels than all the gunpowder, percussion, and nitro-glycerine since discovered have ever been able to settle. It was the discovery of printing, then, that overturned chivalry, and is undermining many other ancient systems that people don't suspect.

Whatever of knightly spirit remained to the nineteenth century, high-cocked bonnets and Colt's revolvers will certainly exterminate. "The age of chivalry is indeed past."

"The knights are dust,  
And their good swords are rust;  
Their souls are with the saints, we trust."

And well may we join with Burke and Coleridge and all the other orators and poets in lamenting the downfall of an institution which, although originating in ignorance and barbarism, and tarnished with vices and abuses, aspired at least to foster all that is pure, exalted, and admirable in the human character—an institution so grand and impressive even in its ruins that Cervantes in ridiculing it has drawn one of the noblest characters in literature, and our young Virginians, in reproducing one of its minor preliminary exercises, enjoy an entertainment far more elegant, exciting, and picturesque than either boating, base-balling, or trotting matches.

The day was bright and warm, but the sultriness of

the air was pleasantly relieved by a light breeze which played through the cool gorges of the hill. As our cavalcade wound down the narrow causeway leading to the Ice Mountain, the broad green meadow appeared alive with gay groups of men, women, children, horses, dogs, and carriages, all tending toward or gathered around the great centre of interest. The tournament lists were staked out on a long level of evenly mowed turf some four hundred yards in length, guarded on either side by a railing of rope, and spanned near the further extremity by an arch of evergreen boughs, from the centre of which the ring was suspended. Outside of these lines were double rows of light wagons and carriages, regularly packed and filled with eager spectators. Near the centre were several extensive pavilions, made of wagon covers, bolting-cloths, or more agreeably thatched with fresh green boughs, shading rows of rough plank seats already occupied by the *élite* of the company—rustic dames whose silks and ribbons, or maidens whose delicate cheeks, shunned the scorching sunshine. Between this dress circle and the rope barrier the space was crowded with the undistinguished multitude of leather-faced mountaineers, squatting or lounging upon the grass, of lint-headed, bare-legged children, and sun-proof negroes full of eager hilarity and vociferous expectation. Behind all, barns, stables, sheds, fodder-racks, fence corners, and umbrageous thickets afforded shelter for the four-footed chivalry who were to play the leading part in the amusements of the day. Around the most distinguished of the equine heroes were gathered sub-groups of interested friends and admirers, ministering to their slightest wants with lover-like devotion, and discussing their points and preten-



THE AGE OF CHIVALRY IS PAST.





THE PARADE.

sions with hopeful animation. Substantial and refreshing hospitality was gratuitously offered from every carriage, wagon, saddlebags, and basket on the ground (not to mention individual side pockets), while across the foot-bridge and beside the icy spring solid lunches and a variety of cooling beverages might be had for a very moderate pecuniary consideration.

But while these every-day gratifications might serve to divert the impatience of the expectant multitude, there were many tufted cavaliers and palpitating ladies who could know neither hunger nor thirst until the grand contest was decided.

The hour had come, the trumpet call had sounded. The enlisted knights were already mustered behind the barn. The chief marshal of the tournament, Rhodomont, a handsome fellow, superbly mounted, with peaked beard and flowing locks cultivated expressly for the rôle, bobbing with plumes and fluttering with rosettes, with an air of egregious importance, was galloping to and fro, posting his guards, heralds, and pursuivants at their proper stations, consulting with the leader of the brass-band, puffing back the encroaching crowd with a tempestuous voice and manner, honoring some lady with a salute of plummy graciousness soft as a silent flute: a knightly Bottom, who could roar you the "frightful lion" or the "sucking dove" with equal facility and effect, and knew well how to use his powers.

Just at this crisis the party from Meadlands arrived on the ground, and, being strangers, sought some official direction in disposing of ourselves. Judging from the grand paraphernalia of Rhodomont that he was one high in authority, our cavalcade,

led by Lady Rhoda and myself, cantered briskly up the lists toward him.

The indignant official wheeled, and shouting, "Clear the lists!" rode toward us, pumping thunder by the way to rebuke the flagrant breach of order. We met in front of the central pavilion, when Rhoda threw up her veil, and with a gracious smile introduced her cavalier as the proposed orator of the day, and all the knights and ladies of her following.

The gallant marshal's broadcloth coat and silken sash were too slight protection against that flashing glance; but had he been cased in Milan steel, he might have fared no better. He waved his baton once, twice, thrice, then leaped to the ground, and his gay panache swept the turf. The band struck up "Hail to the Chief," the first piece on the list. Heralds, grooms, and attendants came running up from all quarters. The exclamations and questionings of the crowd swelled into a regular "hurrah." The ladies were lightly and gracefully dismounted, and their horses led away. Choice seats had been reserved in the green pavilion, and a sweep of the chief's broadsword removed the rope barriers from their path.

As Rhoda ascended the steps all the men and boys within range jostled each other and stretched their necks to catch a glimpse, while all the rosy cheeks turned pale with curious envy.

The music ceased, the vocal murmurs died away. The orator and knights remounted to join the muster behind the barn, when a familiar voice in the crowd spoke up: "Hit's worth me long ride jist to have got another sight of her. Gals, hit's no use figurin' now who'll be crowned. The real

queen has come." The speaker was Jake Nelson, the gallant volunteer of the Dry Fork.

Again the signal bugle was blown, and a troop of forty horsemen burst into the lists at full gallop. They were received with a storm of drums, trumpets, brass-bands, cheers, and waving of handkerchiefs and banners. Charging through the whole length of the course, they executed some pretty military manoeuvres, and wheeling, galloped back to their starting-place. The parade resembled the grand entrée at a circus, or, perhaps, a fancy ball on horseback. The knights were attired variously, according to their whims and pretensions, each wearing some token—a glove, a handkerchief, a ribbon, or bouquet from the lady in whose honor he proposed to risk his neck and exhibit his skill. Two or three were masked, and wore no favors by which they might be distinguished—unknown, perhaps, except to their lady-loves, with whom there had been a secret understanding. Dick Rattlebrain had smeared himself over with umber and Venetian red to personate that famous "youth with flaunting feathers," Hiawatha. Contrary to the advice of his seniors, he also undertook to ride without saddle or stirrups, with only a wolf-skin thrown loosely over his horse's back. Cockney figured as Rob Roy in a Highland costume, admirably adapted to show off his slim legs and knock-knees, but not especially becoming on horseback. The major, for coolness and lightness, appeared all in white, above which his rubicund face glowed like the flame of a candle. Rhoda's colors decorated his cap in the shape of a white and scarlet rosette, and his *nom de guerre* was Bayard.

It would be tiresome to lengthen this catalogue of costumes, which, in truth, were neither very appropriate nor becoming, but which could not conceal entirely the fine athletic figures nor the elegant horsemanship of the cavaliers.

After a moment's breathing the troop was again put in motion, and formed in line in front of the green pavilion to hear the address.

I had studied up my part very carefully, and got through it to the satisfaction of every body, as was evi-

denced by the cheering, waving of handkerchiefs, and zealous braying of the band at its conclusion. Indeed, I overheard a mountaineer remark he "was mightily obliged to that feller for gittin' through his sermon so quick," that the real fun might begin. But when fair Rhoda bestowed a circlet of laurel woven by her own hand, and praised my effort with warm and intelligent appreciation, I was quite satisfied with my rôle of troubadour, and more than pleased with an invitation to occupy a place by her side during the approaching contest.

Still more ceremonies before those popular favorites, the horses, could play their leading part in the game.

A sonorous herald read the rules of the tournament to the assembly, which, omitting details and ceremonies, were substantially as follows: Every knight competing for the prizes was required to enroll his name on the herald's list. Each would ride five courses in turn as his name was called. To make a count he must take the ring fairly on the point of his lance, with his horse at full speed. To him who made the most



THE HIGHLANDER.





THE EASY-GOING STEED.

counts was adjudged the first prize, which, with the honors of the day, entitled him to choose the queen of the tournament. There were four lighter wreaths, adjudged according to the descending scale of excellence, respectively entitling the winners to crown the first, second, third, and fourth maids of honor to her Majesty the Queen of Love and Beauty. In case of a tie on any of these points, the question was decided by a supplementary ride of three courses. On the spectators generally was enjoined order and silence; any one who should voluntarily confuse or balk a rider in his course would be summarily expelled from the grounds, with a chance for something worse.

Then the judges were posted beside the arch where the ring hung suspended. Heralds to proclaim the count, grooms and attendants to replace the ring when taken off, and to assist any cavalier in case of an accident. Others along the line kept back the eager and excited crowd with drawn sabres, while at the lower end the chief marshal called a roll of the knights, who took their places in line in order as they were named.

During these high and ceremonious proceedings a little by-play decided the fate of one of our champions and friends. The colt ridden by Augustus had become painfully excited with the unwonted noise and display, and the rider, who had been twisting his heels outward until his legs ached, lest the spurs he wore might inadvertently stimulate the beast into some dangerous extravagance, at length intimated to Dick that he would retire behind the barn and take the spurs off. Dick objected strenuously, insisting they would be needed when Cockney came to ride at the ring, but amiably agreed to accompany him to the rear to assist him in soothing and managing his steed, and incidentally to get a little stimulant for himself. Now a man or boy that

can't ride is an anomaly in these regions, and as our friends passed a group under a tree, one remarked, "Twig that feller with the cross-barred legs how he sets his critter. Why, he's afeard of her, he is. He can't win no-how."

Stung by this criticism, Cockney dug his heels into the colt's sides, and the next moment lay sprawling on the turf. The grass was soft and clean, so the unhorsed cavalier rose briskly to his feet, and made shift to join in the shout of laughter his mishap had occasioned.

"I say, mister, you can't do nothin' with a hoss like that nohow. Come round here, and I'll show you a hoss you kin ride."

"Can I borrow or hire him?" asked Cockney, eagerly.

"Certainly," said the fellow, "and I'll warrant he's got no bad tricks."

Augustus accompanied his adviser around the barn, followed by a train of gaping boys and negroes.

"There, mister, is a hoss I'm pretty sure you kin manage, and if he should fling you, it won't be a high fall nohow."

The yell of delight that rose from the attendant rabble was a little too much for Cockney's patience. He rushed at the quiz with his lance, but the rascal fled and hid himself in the crowd. Then, crest-fallen and dejected, he took off his spurs, and withdrawing from the tourney, joined the ladies of our party in the pavilion. The younger girls were disposed to tease the dismounted champion, but a glance from Rhoda checked their cruel mirth, and she commended his resolution so gracefully that he was soon at his ease and enjoying the spectacle as much as any of us.

At length all the preliminary ceremonies were concluded, and the game commenced.

The herald, in a loud voice, calls "The Knight of the Mountains." The named champion leaves the ranks and takes his position in the lists, reining up his steed, adjusting himself in the stirrups, couching his lance and fixing his eye on the ring, awaiting the word in statuesque silence. Held in sympathetic expectancy, the whole assembly is silent and motionless. You might hear a bee buzzing or a wren chattering in the barn.

The marshal raises his baton; the trumpet sounds; the herald shouts, "Charge!"

Simultaneously the knight's spurs strike his horse's flanks. He starts with a leap, first into a gallop, then, gathering speed, dashes under the arch at a full run. There

is a clash, and the cord to which the ring was suspended sways to and fro.

Their tongues are loosed, and some premature shouts are heard, and some fair expectant, overeager and confident, waves her scarf. But the herald at the arch proclaims—a miss. The proclamation is repeated along the line. The attendant replaces the ring, which was only thrown off the hook by a side wipe of the lance. The champion wheels his steed and rides back to his post—a little sheepish, perhaps, but nodding to his lady as he passes. “Better luck next time. He rode bravely, if he didn’t win,” she whispers to her neighbor, apologetically.

So rode half a dozen others, missing successively, but in a manner that promised better when they had got the “hang” of the new ground.

Then came Hiawatha’s turn, who entered the lists with a gallant confidence that won him good wishes from all quarters. His charge was superb, and he carried away the ring. The heralds doubled their voices as they proclaimed “Ring.” The shouts of the assembly woke the echoes in the mountains, and drowned even the triumphant music of the band, and the thunder of the big drum. The successful knight rode back to his post, saluted by waving handkerchiefs and exclamations of applause, which he returned with a wild Indian war-whoop.

“That was most admirably done,” said Rhoda, with animation. “Miss Primrose will wear the crown, undoubtedly.”

“Perhaps,” replied Prudence, coolly. “If her champion don’t lose his head with his first success.”

“It has just begun,” said Lilly Meadows, “and the Black Knight has not yet appeared.”

“And who is the Black Knight?”

“Oh! at all the tournaments there is invariably a Black Knight that comes in toward the last, masked and mysterious, who, if he wins, crowns some lady that no one has thought of. The trouble up here is that one Black Knight always wins, and then he can’t be mysterious, for his horse is better known than his person, which he never shows in society; but I would recognize him a mile off.”

“‘A soldier riding from the wars,  
The sun did shine most clearly;  
The lady knew him by his horse,  
Because she loved him dearly.’”

Lilly blushed, and said, gayly, “But your poet leaves us in doubt whether the lady’s

eye-sight was sharpened by love for the soldier or the horse.”

“I’ll leave you to solve that doubt, Miss Lilly”—for I had reason to know the person to whom she alluded—“and perhaps—”

The lady blushed still redder, and silenced me with a significant look toward her father.

Just then a colored servant advanced through the crowd and handed me a sealed note. I excused myself to the ladies, and withdrew to read the contents of the mysterious missive. At the moment the welkin rang again with shouts of applause. The major had gallantly taken the ring, and returning, saluted Rhoda as he passed.

“You’ll be queen,” said Prudence, “for your champion returns calm as a summer morning.”

Rhoda smiled, but answered, “Indeed, I hope not, although the major rides so gallantly, and really merits the gratification of success. I would prefer not to wear the crown.”

“Perhaps it would please you better from some other hand?”

The widow replied, with quiet dignity, “Oh no, not at all. I was only thinking of the gratification that others would miss, while to me the pleasure would be nothing—rather an embarrassment.”

“I believe you are sincere as generous, dear Rhoda,” said Lilly, laying her hand on her friend’s shoulder, and half whispering, in an agitated voice, “I am sure the major won’t win, for there’s the Black Knight.”

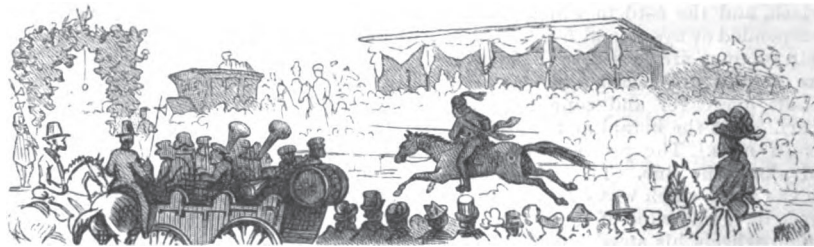
“And who is he?” again asked Rhoda.

Mr. Meadows looked vexed, and was silent. Lilly made no answer, so absorbed was she in the entrance of the new cavalier.



HIAWATHA.





THE CHARGE.

"The Unknown!" cried the herald. The trumpet sounded "Charge!" The black champion flashed over the course with a speed and grace that elicited an uproar of applause even before the result was proclaimed.

"Ring!" shouted the herald, endeavoring to make his voice heard above the tumult.

"Ring, of course," exclaimed Lilly Meadows, clapping her hands with undisguised delight. "He never misses."

The tremor of the first essay being over, the riding grew better at every round. The major was cool and steady, and made four counts, losing the fifth only by an accidental slip of his stirrup. The Knight of the Mountains, recovering from his first miss, made four successive counts also. Hiawatha, riding bare-back, had a second and a third success, growing wilder and more excited at each round. His reckless spirit seemed to communicate itself to his horse. The animal became restive and unruly, and on the fourth round swerved from the course, striking and nearly upsetting the arch, and, plunging headlong against the dash-board of a carriage, fell back upon his

haunches. The rider shot from his slippery back like a bolt from a catapult, whizzing through the carriage and out at the back curtain, sprawling on the grass ten feet beyond. The women screamed, the men swore. The appalled spectators rushed forward to gather up the corpse, with its head in a lunch basket.

"His head is clean smashed and his brains running out," cried one. "A doctor! a doctor!"

Half a dozen rural practitioners responded to the call. The chief marshal and heralds declared there was nothing the matter, and ordered people to keep their places. Meanwhile the body had been seized by four men, when it began to kick and struggle violently. A skillful village surgeon extricated the basket. The patient's head was a fearful sight—a horse-tail and broken feathers kneaded up in a four-pound mass of soft butter, the whole sauced over with a half gallon of piccalilli. One of the doctors gave the figure a sharp shaking to discover if any bones were broken. The experiment only developed a smothered oath. The skillful practitioner then perforated the



TAKING LUNCH WITHOUT AN INVITATION.



THE QUEEN.

buttery coating with the mouth of a pocket flask. Some normal movements of the throat and chest were pronounced flattering symptoms. Another suggested bleeding.

"Bleed thunder!" cried the knight. "Catch my horse, and scrape this cursed butter off my head."

The doctor turned the patient over to half a dozen officious negroes, who led him off to a thicket near the bank of the river, whence plain Richard Rattlebrain returned in half an hour, cooled off, and clad in his traveling costume, and declaring to the ladies this was the most disagreeable scrape he had ever had.

Meanwhile, as soon as it was ascertained that no lives were lost, the riding was resumed. It was contested bravely, but the mysterious black rider was proclaimed victor of the tournament. The inferior prizes were adjusted satisfactorily, the major receiving the second. The chief marshal complimented the victors in a neat speech, and then the wreaths were respectively distributed. Then, while the band played "The girl I left behind me," the Black Knight, bearing the crown on the end of his lance, started to ride slowly around the course.

There were many expectant and palpitating hearts in the dress circle, but the interest seemed to be chiefly concentrated in and around the Meadowland party. Mr. Meadows look-

ed grave and vexed; Lilly, conscious and fluttering; the widow, relieved and patronizingly amiable, whispered encouragement to her younger friend.

The dark cavalier, as seemed to have been generally anticipated, stopped opposite the group, and slowly lowering the point of his lance, electrified the circle by dropping the crown at Rhoda's feet. The trumpets pealed, and the crowd joined in approving acclamations.

The widow hastily rose up, and blushed redder than a rose. She was actually confused.

Lilly Meadows, surprised and mystified, drew down her veil to hide her agitation. The father, smiling, lifted the wreath to place it on the lady's head.

"It is a mistake," said Rhoda, firmly. "It was clearly intended for Lilly."

"No," said Mr. Meadows. "It has a handkerchief embroidered with your cipher attached to it. It is yours, and the victor awaits your acceptance."

Rhoda's hand trembled as she took and recognized the handkerchief. "Where did this come from? I lost it weeks ago, I don't know where. But where is—" Then, recovering her self-possession, she said, with calm dignity, "Sir Knight, I thank you for this compliment, but I can not accept the crown from an unknown cavalier."

The chief marshal whispered to The Unknown, who dismounted, and ascending the steps, knelt at the lady's feet, at the same time throwing back the mask and hood that concealed his features.

The widow sunk back, and clasping her hands over her burning face, exclaimed, passionately, "Mr. Laureate! can it be possible?"

Then, calmly and proudly, I took the wreath, and with my own hands crowned my glorious queen.

